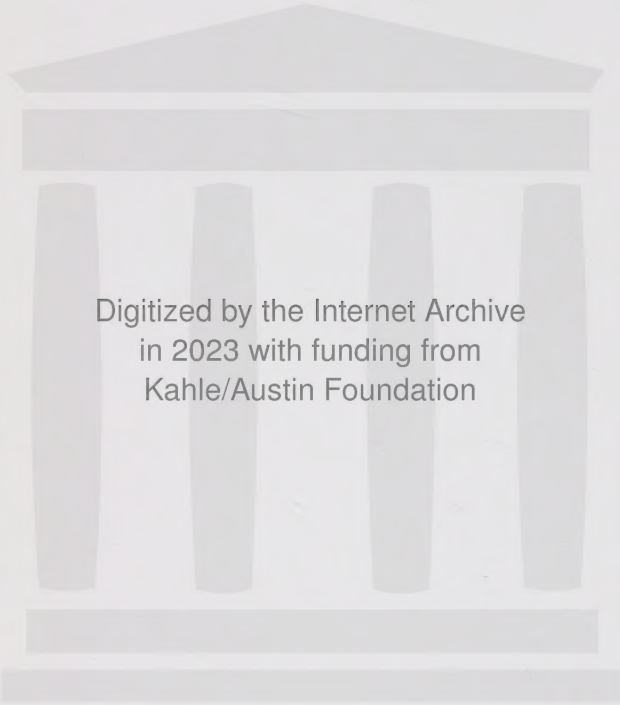


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Sincerely -

P. D. Gould

IN FLORIDA'S DAWN

A Romance of History

BY

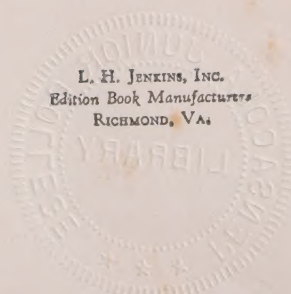
P. D. GOLD

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TO HIS EXCELLENCY, HONORABLE JOHN W. MARTIN

FLORIDA'S PROGRESSIVE GOVERNOR

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

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NOTE

Forty-two years before the English landed at Jamestown, forty-nine years before the Dutch built their fort on Manhattan Island and fifty-five years before the Pilgrim Fathers arrived in the Mayflower at Plymouth, the first battle for religious liberty in the New World was fought on the banks of the St. Johns River in Florida.

Fired by the teachings of Martin Luther, which they called the New Religion, and seeking a home where they could worship God in their own way, the French Huguenots had there established themselves. This was in 1564, only seventy-two years after Columbus discovered America and was the first attempt at colonization within the limits of the United States.

It was in a period when Europe was torn by civil and religious strife. Catherine de Medici ruled France through her son Charles IX and plotted with the Catholic King of Spain against her own Protestant subjects. It was just eight years before the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The battle in Florida was a bloody affair between the French and Spanish at a time when their mother countries were at peace. The event has had but little mention in the histories of the United States for the reason that Florida was not one of the thirteen colonies, yet this struggle may be classed as one of the decisive battles of America for it settled the question whether the early southern civilization should be French or Spanish, Protestant or Catholic.

Florida's Dawn was also the dawn of a New World.

Daytona Beach, Florida
January, 1926.

P. D. G.

IN FLORIDA'S DAWN

A Romance of History

CHAPTER I

THE CURSE OF THE BLOOD

Captain Rene de Laudonniere, who by the grace of His Majesty, Charles the IX, was commander of Fort Caroline and the province of New France, lay ill with fever. For weeks he had spent sweltering days and nights fighting the stubborn disease which the medicines of Charnay, the doctor, and the sassafras of the Indians had seemed unable to conquer. But, now—overpowering the racking pain gripping the marrow of his bones, was the rage which surged through him at the announcement that one whom he had trusted most of all had turned traitor.

Not that treason was uncommon in the French camp of Huguenots on the River of May in that land called by the Indians, Canico, but named Florida by Ponce De Leon and New France by Jean Ribault. Sedition had been a constant menace since the first arrival of the colony, at times breaking out into open revolt, but in every case it was Louis Roget, second in command of the expedition, upon whom Laudonniere had depended to quell the disturbances. It was Roget's cool, determined methods that held the hot-headed young Frenchmen in check whenever the authority of Laudonniere seemed powerless. But now, according to the word of Jean Prevatt, Louis Roget was a traitor. Roget, his best friend, had turned upon him, and taking advantage of his illness had sought to usurp the authority of the commander. For a man in full possession of his health, with faculties keen and clear, such an outlook would have been dark enough, but for Laudonniere, whose

mind and body were weary with the constant battle against disease, the future held only the blackness of despair.

Even the room bore witness of the miserable conditions which existed in the colony. There was only a rough table, two chairs and the bed upon which he lay, all other articles of furniture having been removed to the brigantines, anchored in the river, which on the morrow were to set sail on their return to France. The expedition under Captain Rene de Laudonniere and his efforts to colonize New France had failed.

For sixteen months he had led the band of adventurers, who had left France full of enthusiasm, to seek riches in the New World. Colonization of those of the New Religion had been the dream of Admiral Coligny, head of the House of Chatillion to which Laudonniere himself was attached. But Laudonniere had come to know, to his sorrow, that the staple of the project was unsound, for instead of tillers of the soil, which was the only real basis upon which a colony could be established, his followers consisted largely of volunteers from the Huguenot noblesse whose restless swords had rusted in the scabbard following the cessation of hostilities between the Houses of Guise and Conde. These, with some soldiers paid out of the Royal Treasury and a few artisans and tradesmen, had made up his company which had been rife with conspiracy since the beginning.

The promise of Coligny to hasten reinforcements and supplies had not been kept. The weeks had dragged into months, and the months into a year, and now still another year was well along. Each day had brought new problems and a nearer approach to disaster. Gold, which was the one thought in the minds of those who had joined the expedition, had not been found. It still lay like a mirage to the west in the land of the Apalachees where, according to the stories of the Indians, the inhabitants drank from cups of gold and jewels were as common as the sands of the seashore. These stories whetted the

greed of the covetous Frenchmen and led to greater exertions, but the expeditions sent to find this land had returned empty-handed, sick and exhausted from their fruitless search, with only accounts of impenetrable jungles and endless forests. In the meanwhile precious time had been lost when the land might have been cultivated, and all their supplies had been exhausted. Then, even the Indians, as if disgusted at the improvidence of the white men, had shown an unwillingness to provide maize, and the garrison had been forced to a diet of roots and herbs and even snakes and powdered dried fish bones to sustain life.

The company of French gentlemen had become a motley crew, ragged and unkempt, whiling away the hours in the fort by recounting their grievances one with another, the monotony broken only by a visit from Indians or the floating of an alligator in the river. From the top of the bluff the sea was constantly scanned by the outlook in the hope of seeing the sails which would bring them help. But the melancholy shake of the head daily answered the longing eye and voice of those waiting in the fort below. The blame of it all was placed on Laudonniere, against him all the bitterness seemed to be centered. He would have been deposed long ago had it not been for Roget, and no one else knew it better than Laudonniere himself. His faithful friend had stood like a bulwark against the onslaught of his enemies, like a breakwater against the mutinous storms that seemed always to be brewing. Thus the second summer had slowly passed by when Sir John Hawkins, the Englishman, came.

The timely arrival of Hawkins had undoubtedly prevented another uprising which the miserable conditions of the colony made almost certain. The knightly buccaneer, returning from a marauding expedition in the West Indies, happened to land for water at the mouth of the River of May, and having in common with the Huguenots a hatred of priests and Spaniards,

had readily sold the Frenchmen supplies and a ship in exchange for the best cannon of the fort. It was Roget whose good judgment and diplomacy had made the exchange possible, for Laudonniere was ill at the time.

Scarcely had the English topsails sunk beneath the horizon before the colony had begun preparations to return to their beloved France. These preparations were now being completed and all would be ready to sail at high tide on the morrow, and in the late afternoon of this day the commander himself would be taken on board the ship. Charnay, the Chaplain, whose knowledge of medicine made him the colony's physician as well as spiritual advisor, had insisted that Laudonniere keep to his bed, and the command of the colony be left to Roget. But Laudonniere commanded that he be fully informed of all that was going on. Roget endeavored to comply as far as possible with the Doctor's orders, and Laudonniere fumed and fretted at what his fevered brain conceived to be rank disobedience, closely akin to mutiny.

So when on this 29th day of August, 1565, Jean Prevatt, third in command, had entered Laudonniere's room and requested a private audience on account of matters of great importance, he found a ready listener. The commander had promptly dismissed Pierre, the young attendant, who had been told by Charnay that he should under no conditions leave the bedside of his master. It was the words of Prevatt that had enraged Laudonniere. The sick man clutched the side of the bed in his efforts to sit erect, and through his closely trimmed beard, his thin oval face appeared flushed and his lips cracked with a burning fever. His attempt to sit erect was too much and he sank back upon his pillow with a groan.

"Mon Dieu," he exclaimed, "would that I were well, I would show this traitor the end of the rope and that at once."

Prevatt stood beside the bed and covetly watched the sick man writhing in pain, both mental and physical, but when he

spoke his voice was soft and coaxing. "Remember your promise to me," he said. "You were to tell no one where you received information. It would ruin all. The conspirators do not suspect me of being loyal to you. You keep my secret and I will keep you advised of all that transpires."

"Tell me more," said Laudonniere, turning in an effort to ease his pain.

Prevatt pulled one of the chairs to the bedside. "May I sit?" he said humbly.

"Go on," the commander replied impatiently as he grasped a wild turkey wing which the attendant had been using as a fan. "Tell me all."

Prevatt settled himself comfortably by the bedside. He knew he would be undisturbed for a time. Charnay had gone aboard ship to make the last arrangement for the removal of Laudonniere. Roget, indefatigable in the arrangement of every detail, was busy in the final plans for tomorrow's sailing. His own confederates were alive to his schemes and would see that no one entered the room without signalling him, and he had heard the orders of Laudonniere himself to the attendant not to come again until he was called.

"It was only yesterday that I learned of the conspiracy," he began. "It was directly after the Englishman sailed. Roget taking advantage of your illness, decided that as soon as we were well at sea, he would put you in irons and assume command. Those who oppose his purpose will be overpowered and he will turn the prow of the vessels toward the Indies and after capturing sufficient supplies from the Spaniards return in search of gold and set up a government in New France with himself as King."

Laudonniere's eyes glared with the mingled fire of fever and rage.

"Are you positive that this is true?"

"I heard it from one of his own confederates."

"Who?"

Prevatt looked quickly around as if expecting the wall had ears. He leaned over the bed and whispered, "You will not tell from whence it came?"

"I swear," replied Laudonniere earnestly.

"Henri Vasseur."

"Ah, the leader of the last mutiny."

"The same."

A flickering light of uncertainty wavered in the eyes of the commander. "Perhaps it is a plot of Vasseur's to turn me against Roget," he said as if struggling to reason clearly. "Roget, you know, has always been very faithful to me."

"Yes, sir, so I have always believed myself, but I understand now that he was only waiting for the right time. Roget, you know, is half Spaniard, and a Spaniard will leave no stone unturned to gain his purpose."

"True, but he has been more than a brother."

"Yes, and thereby greater is the treachery."

"I only come to you as a faithful follower," continued Prevatt persuasively. "Do not take my word, wait, if you prefer, but it may be too late," he ended with a shrug, and then added quickly, "My only request is that you preserve your oath of secrecy."

He watched Laudonniere as a cat watches a mouse. The sick man panted in the heat and nervously swung the turkey wing to create a little breeze.

"But suppose it is true," he said half to himself.

"Yes, suppose it is true," said Prevatt softly. "It will be too late after we have set sail. Now is the time to act."

"But what can I do?" asked Laudonniere petulantly. "Roget has the confidence of the men. I have trusted him. I am virtually in his power."

Prevatt almost whispered in his ear. "It is very easy."

"How?"

"You know that Roget is very friendly with the Indians."

"Yes, through his friendship for them he has saved us many times from famine," agreed Laudonniere.

"Send him to Satouriana tomorrow with a message. Let it be upon any pretext. If he refuses to go, it is but proof of his guilt. If he goes, set sail during his absence and you will be rid of this conspirator who would usurp your powers."

"What! Leave Roget here alone in this wilderness?" Laudonniere shivered at the thought.

"He will never suffer among his friends."

"Ah, I couldn't do that."

"In your magnanimity, sir, you are more kind to him than he has been to you."

"What do you mean?" Laudonniere asked quickly.

"You think of his physical comfort, while he seeks to rob you of that which you treasure most of all, your good name."

Laudonniere glanced fiercely at the man, "Speak not to me in riddles, Prevatt, tell me what you mean."

The other let his words come slowly that their meaning might surely sink in. "You are probably not aware that this half Spaniard has written letters to Admiral Coligny concerning you."

Laudonniere nervously caught Prevatt's arm. "What are you telling me?"

A cynical smile played about the corners of Prevatt's mouth. "Roget is a very dear friend of yours, Captain Laudonniere. I trust you and hope you will not forget the fact that I am reporting information concerning my superior officer. If you do not act on my suggestion and leave him here, I must count upon your honor to preserve my secret."

"You can trust me. Speak, tell me, what did Roget write Admiral Coligny?" Laudonniere commanded impatiently.

"I have it upon good authority that he sent letters to Admiral Coligny by the ships that returned more than a year ago

stating that you were attempting to set up a kingdom in New France. In other words, he has accused you to Coligny of doing the very thing which he intends to do himself."

Laudonniere seemed stunned by this recital. Prevatt nervously watched him as he lay sobbing with face buried in his pillow.

No other sound broke the stillness save the droning of the flies that buzzed in the summer heat or the occasional hammering in the fort in preparation of the morrow's departure. The one at the bedside waited until the convulsion had passed and the flushed face turned to him. The eyes were bloodshot and gleamed like fiery balls. The body shook as with an ague. "Water," he gasped, and clutched the mug with both hands. "I can depend upon you to help me, Prevatt," he said more calmly as he motioned for the mug to be refilled from an earthen jar in the corner.

"To the end," asserted Prevatt promptly.

"You swear it."

"By my faith in our Religion," Prevatt replied suavely, placing the mug on a rough table near the bed.

"How many men have you upon whom you can depend?" Laudonniere inquired after a moment.

"Oh, about thirty, I suppose."

"Good! Roget is no longer in command. You will take his place. If he attempts to resist your authority, place him in irons and confine him in the dungeon. If he submits, let him have his freedom, but have your men watch him and at the first attempt at insubordination have him arrested. Before we sail I will decide what disposition to make of him."

Prevatt repressed his feeling of exultation for this was even more than he had hoped for. In full command, Roget in his power and Laudonniere ill—the rest would be easy, he thought. His only fear was that Laudonniere might weaken under the influence of the close friendship of Roget and that the Com-

mander might in an unguarded moment disclose to Roget the reason for that officer's demotion. In that case, he knew Roget, through his loyalty to his commander, would readily sacrifice his own life to save his friend and defeat Prevatt. But it was all a gamble anyway, and he could only trust to luck and the honor of his chief. It would be well, however, to further fortify his position by emphasizing the importance of secrecy.

"I thank you for the confidence imposed in me," he began humbly. "I will serve you to the best of my ability, but I must have your support in every way."

"Of course you will have that," Laudonniere began.

"I mean even to the extent of not giving Roget a reason for your act. That would mean our undoing. He would know that he was discovered and could checkmate us."

"You are right, he shall not know."

"And you will mention to no one, not even Charnay, what I have told you."

"I have given you my word of honor," Laudonniere said impatiently.

Prevatt saw that he was overstepping the mark. "Pardon me, sir, I might have known. Your word is sufficient." Yet he felt relieved for he knew that Laudonniere's promise would not be broken.

At this moment the whistle of a bob white was heard and Prevatt arose hastily. "If there is nothing further, I will go," he said as he moved toward the door. "Wait!" commanded Laudonniere, "call Piere, he will get writing material—I will sign the order now."

But before Prevatt could reach the door to call the boy, it opened and Captain Louis Roget stood upon the threshold. As he paused, his form almost filled the opening, and the plume in his slouched hat touched the casing overhead. There was an elegance about the man which even the rents in his much worn shirt and rudely darned hose did not hide. The distinguishing

traits of French and Spanish mixtures were marked in the coloring of skin and hair. Across the right cheek of a well moulded face a sabre wound reached from nose to ear giving a savage expression when the face was in repose but wrinkling into a dimple when smiling, thereby softening a countenance which bespoke strength of character and tenacity of purpose.

His rapier clanked at his side as he halted abruptly and viewed the room, intuitively feeling the restraint which his sudden appearance had created. True—there was nothing strange in Captain Dean Prevatt's presence in the room of the commanding officer although he was at the moment supposed to be superintending the loading at the wharf; Laudonniere may have summoned him, or Prevatt may have called to report on some matter of importance, although he had been informed of the doctor's orders that Laudonniere was not to be disturbed. These were the thoughts that flashed through Roget's mind as he halted in the doorway.

"Pardon, Messieurs, do I intrude?" he began, but when his gaze fell upon the flushed face and bloodshot eyes of Laudonniere, he hastened to the bedside. "Ah, sir, I fear you are worse," he said compassionately, attempting to smooth the pillow.

But Laudonniere drew away from him and shot a look of such hatred that Roget recoiled and glanced inquiringly from him to Prevatt. Before he could frame a question, Laudonniere raised himself trembling upon his elbow and cried, "You Spanish hound of Hell, give me your sword."

Roget was so astonished that he did not move. His expression of surprise gradually changed to one of sympathetic concern and as if talking to a child, he said gently, "There, there, Rene, do not get excited. All is well," and again he attempted to smooth the pillow of the sick man.

But Laudonniere seemed to be driven into a frenzy. He struck the extended hand and hurling the light covering from

him sprang to the floor and stood with arms upraised. His emaciated figure swayed like a limb in a strong breeze. "You think to win me with your soft words, you traitor," he hissed. "Give me your sword. Prevatt, arrest him." Prevatt started forward, but one look from Roget was sufficient and he stood back.

Roget was now thoroughly alarmed, but not for himself. His only thought was for Laudonniere, who he believed was suffering from the delirium of fever.

"Get Charnay here—quick," he ordered. Prevatt hesitated a second. It had not been his intention to take orders from this man who was now his inferior, but the habit was his, for it was not the first time he had seen that expression and heard that tone. Others had disobeyed and paid the penalty. It took only one word to make him move. Roget pointed his finger toward the door, "Go," he said sternly, and Prevatt lost no time in leaving.

Roget turned his attention to Laudonniere who stood tottering, and before he could spring to his side, fell in a heap on the floor. Roget gently gathered the frail body in his arms and laid it on the bed.

"Water," came faintly between the groans of the sick man.

With arms beneath the shoulders he raised the form and held the mug to the cracked lips. The eyelids slowly opened and the bloodshot balls rolled upward, finally focusing on Roget's face. An expression of tenderness and sorrow wavered in the expression. With a convulsive shudder there came a faint sound from the lips. "The curse of the blood," were the words spoken, and the body became limp as Laudonniere sank back unconscious.

Roget did not move. As deeply concerned as he was in the welfare of his comrade and chief, the words had awakened memories too poignant to be quickly obliterated.

"The curse of the blood." These were the very words he

himself had used when, pouring into the ears of his friend the story of his boyhood, he had described a scene written so indelibly in his memory. How upon a hill close to an Asturian village near the city of Avilles he had been forced to watch his mother burned at the stake, the innocent victim of the Spanish Inquisition. And her only crime was that of marrying a French Huguenot. How well he remembered her in their happy home in La Rochelle, France, when she taught him the Spanish language and told him of her own childhood days in her beloved Avilles. She loved to tell how one day a handsome young French merchant had come and how she had longed for the time when his ship would come again. And finally it did come, and he wooed her and though he was a Huguenot, his love for her was so great and hers for him the same that they did not let the difference in their religions mar their life's happiness. So she married him and went to live in La Rochelle. And though her life was with those of the New Religion her heart was with the old and she had never failed to teach her only child that Christ's love was the foundation of each and He would never condemn where love reigned supreme. But the time had come when she was called back to Spain where her own mother was ill unto death and had asked to see her daughter before she passed away. So his father had taken them to Avilles and left them while he went on his voyage. And scarcely had his grandmother died, when his mother was arrested by the agents of the Inquisition, tried in secret and became a victim of the auto-da-fe.

He, himself, was with difficulty smuggled out of the country, for the system of the Inquisition knew neither age nor sex. These experiences had made him a sworn enemy of everything Spanish, although he was half Spanish himself, and had made him an ardent follower of the Huguenot faith. In his love for his religion he had striven to adhere to its altruistic teachings and it was in a moment of pious confession to Laudonniere

that he had admitted that any tendency to depart therefrom must be the curse of his Spanish blood.

But what could Laudonniere mean by the words at this time? He looked down into the face drawn and emaciated by sickness and dismissed from his mind all thoughts other than that the words were the delusion of a fevered brain. He aroused himself from the nightmare of the past to the realization that it was time he was doing something for his friend and commander who seemed to be in extremis.

"Where is that boy?" he said to himself. "Piere, Piere," he called.

The boy came sleepily through the door. "Yes, sir, I am here—what is it?"

"Get Charnay at once, the master is very ill," Roget said excitedly.

The boy was gone but a moment when he came again with Charnay. He had met him just outside the fort. The Chaplain had received no message as to Laudonniere's condition. Prevatt had evidently missed him on his return from the ship.

Charnay hastened to make an examination and Roget stood aside anxiously awaiting the result for he knew that much depended thereon. If Charnay found that Laudonniere could not be removed to the brigantine in the afternoon, they could not sail upon the morrow. The men, sorely distressed by the continued hardships had their hopes raised to the highest degree of ecstasy at the contemplation of the return to France which the acquisition of supplies and an extra ship from Hawkins had made possible. All knew that the season of the Equinoctial storms was approaching and that delay of a few days might mean a delay of several weeks, and the limited supplies obtained from the English would not be sufficient to last that period. The improved condition of the commander of the colony had been a source of gratification to all and the announcement of Charnay the day before that he would be able

to stand the trip was heralded with delight by the members of the company, not so much on account of their love for Laudonniere as for the prospects of returning home. Roget knew that a change in his condition for the worse would mean that mutiny, always smouldering among the restless crew, would break forth with such violence that the very existence of the shattered land would be at stake.

Charnay arose from the bedside and looked at Roget. "There has been a turn for the worse," he said solemnly. "His temperature and pulse are not so good, but he is sleeping now, and until he awakes, I cannot tell. Let us pray." And on their knees they asked God to preserve their commander and give them strength through the dangers that beset them, with such seeming diligence.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSPIRACY

Fort Caroline, so named for King Charles IX, was built in the summer of 1564, upon the south bank of the river called by the Indians, Welaka and by the French, the River of May. It stood near the brink, on high ground, yet not so high as the bluff which lay a few hundred yards to the east and which hid from view the ocean some four miles distant. To the west was a broad marsh dotted with small islands covered with pines and palmettos with creeks and bayous interlacing the marsh grass like the tendrils of a vine. These streams were large or small as the tide ebbed and flowed. In front of the fort lay the broad and lazy waters of the river, its distant shores fringed with woodland, and immediately behind there arose an encircling wall of pine, cedar, palm and magnolia, with here and there a live oak, its festoons of gray moss relieving the effect of solid green.

The fortification was constructed in the shape of a triangle with its base lying parallel with the river where the defense was a palisade of pine and palmetto logs laid lengthwise and braced with timbers between which sharp spikes were driven. On the other two sides were trenches and ramparts of earth strengthened with facines and sod. At each angle was a bastion with wide gorges and flanks projecting outward, its faces meeting at a salient angle which commanded the foreground and walls.

Within the fort was a spacious parade and around it various buildings for lodging and storage. These buildings were

built of pine logs and boards, some roofed with slab, others thatched with the leaves of the palmetto which was the custom of the natives in building their huts. One of the buildings which stood near the bastion at the eastern angle was built solidly of logs and was the powder magazine and close by another used as a store house. On the north side, and larger than the rest, was a house with covered galleries, the home of Laudonniere and his officers. Along the western wall was built a row of huts which were the sleeping quarters of the men.

Beside the bastion, at the southern angle and leading to the west side of the fort, was the main portal from which a beaten path led to the wharf. But before starting on its downward slope to the river it straggled upward a little way by the door of a small chapel which stood in a grove of palms some hundred feet away from the gate. Here Charnay held daily services, expounding the doctrine of the New Religion. There were many devout members in the colony but there were others only Huguenots in name, in whose hearts were kindled dreams of wealth and adventure rather than the thought of religious freedom.

Through the sand the path wound down the hill beneath the palms and oaks around the west angle of the fort to a point where the high banks of the river dropped off to meet the low land of the marsh. Here a dock had been built of pine boards laid on beams across palmetto piles sunk into the mud. This dock reached across the marsh grass into the stream where the river was sufficiently deep to float a small shallop.

In the river opposite the fort, the brigantines lay at anchor—the one purchased from Sir John Hawkins, the other, the Breton, one of the vessels that had brought the colony from France.

From the freshly sawed pine boards in the dock the hot rays of the August sun drew tiny amber-colored globules, which glistened in the bright light, and the sticky resin clung

to the canvass bags that were being loaded on the shallop as if nature was attempting to throw a last impediment in the way of the departing garrison. But the men, dressed in ragged shirts and drawers, sweating beneath old woolen hats, sang joyfully as they labored. A group of Indian canoes stuck their noses in the mud at the edge of the marsh grass as the occupants stolidly watched the activities.

Jean Prevatt came rapidly down the path, his keen eyes carefully taking in the scene before him. The attention of the crowd on the dock was centered on an approaching shallop in which a man stood with upraised oar, ready to strike a floating alligator when the boat should come within reach. Taking cognizance of the fact that he was not being noticed, Prevatt beckoned to one of the men, and turning, retraced his footsteps up the path.

The man who followed him was Henri Vasseur, an adventurous spirit, whose early life had been spent fighting in the civil wars of France and who had come to New France solely for the purpose of finding gold. The success of the colony otherwise meant nothing to him, as he regarded a preacher as of little service as a priest. He had been the leader of most of the mutinous outbreaks in the colony and had been forgiven many times by Laudonniere, much against the advice of Roget.

He overtook Prevatt in the palm grove below the Chapel, and asked impatiently. "What did you do?"

"We cannot talk here," replied Prevatt. "Go to the big oak in the forest back of the fort. La Roche is on his way there now. Take the path behind the Chapel, I will go to the east."

Vasseur grunted approval and turned to the right, Prevatt proceeding along the path to the fort. Entering the west gate he crossed the parade and not seeing Charnay about and further noticing that there was no one who would question him, he shrugged his shoulders and passed on through the eastern gate. What was the use of bothering with Charnay now? His

time was too valuable.

He took a circuitous route that led along the edge of the bluff to the east as if he was going down the river, but after entering the woods, he turned south and followed the trail which he knew would bring him to the place of meeting. He did not care to be seen with those who were known to be the rebellious spirits of the colony, and more especially now, since Laudonniere had placed him in command in Roget's place. His reason for not having Roget arrested at once was the fact that he doubted his ability to accomplish this end.

He knew that Laudonniere's act in turning against Roget was directly attributable to a fevered mind. In a healthy state the leader would have scorned the acceptance of the story without more tangible proofs. Prevatt knew that the half Spaniard with the assistance of Charnay upon whose help he could always count, could wield sufficient power to checkmate any scheme of his unless he had the help of Vasseur and his following.

For more than a year Vasseur had planned to seize the Breton and go forth on a piratical expedition. To further such schemes and to place himself right with the powers at home he had readily induced Prevatt, who was more proficient in writing than himself, to send by a returning ship a letter to Admiral Coligny to the effect that Laudonniere was planning to make himself king of New France. In this letter he had signed a fictitious name, he had been careful to state that Jean Prevatt and Henri Vasseur were among the loyal subjects of King Charles, knowing that His Royal Majesty would forgive any act committed against one guilty of treason.

Of all those in the garrison only Prevatt and Vasseur knew of this letter, and even they were not sure that it had reached its destination. It was Prevatt's idea, suddenly conceived during his audience with Laudonniere, to accuse Roget of the very thing of which he himself was guilty, and he flattered

himself that Vasseur would commend his sagacity. But there were many threads in the entangled skein of the conspiracy which in his eagerness to accuse Roget, he had failed to consider.

Prevatt thought that he had quite skillfully played the game between the two factions. He had at all times been able to keep in touch with Vasseur, the acknowledged leader of the conspirators, and simultaneously enjoy the confidence of Laudonniere. He reasoned that if the conspirators won he could easily usurp Vasseur's authority and become the chief. If they failed, his position with Laudonniere would be just as secure. In fact, it had been strengthened in his sudden promotion over Roget, but as he hurried along the path, he wondered how the mutinous Vasseur would view his unexpected honor.

As he crossed the hollow and turned upward on the hill, he suddenly came face to face with a young Indian, who evidently having heard him approaching, had stood aside to allow him to pass. The sudden appearance of the tall, naked form, so close to him quite startled Prevatt and he stepped back with an exclamation of surprise. In the young savage, he recognized Olata, son of Satouriana, Chief of the Tumucuan, the most powerful Cacique in all the surrounding country. His bronze skin was tattooed with figures of birds and animals in token of his rank, and upon his head was a plume of feathers. A string of beads encircled his neck and from his belt, his only garment, there hung tiny pieces of bright metal, beneath which protruded a long scalping knife. In his hand he held his bow and his quiver was well filled with arrows, but his mien was pleasing and there was no evident sign of hostility as he stood with head erect and waited for the white man to pass.

Prevatt had often seen Olata at the fort and knew that he was the devoted friend of Louis Roget. In fact, it was Olata's friendship for Roget that had been the means of persuading Satouriana to provide sufficient maize to keep the colony from

starvation. But Prevatt had never seen Olata so bedecked as today. It suddenly occurred to him that there must be some meaning in all this. His guilty conscience made him suspicious of everything and he felt quite uncomfortable until Olata, as if reading his thoughts, broke the silence and said kindly. "Good bye, white brother." Thinking the Indian intended this as a farewell greeting to himself, Prevatt heaved a sigh of relief and stretched forth his hand to reciprocate, when to his surprise the Indian made no motion toward accepting it, but shook his head and pointed toward the fort. "No—white brother there," he said, and folding his arms, he stood a little more aside as if in invitation for Prevatt to pass on. This Prevatt did quickly enough, and when a few feet further along the trail he turned to see what had become of Olata, there was no one in sight.

Prevatt felt quite uncomfortable. The sudden appearance of this Indian, a loyal ally of Roget's somehow did not argue any particular good for him. He hoped that he would make his way promptly to the fort and not loiter in that vicinity, for he would much prefer that he did not see him meeting Vasseur and La Roche. While he knew that Olata spoke but a few words of French, he was aware that Roget had become quite proficient in the language of the Indians and was the interpreter in all the conferences with them, therefore he would probably learn all that Olata knew.

These were his thoughts as he reached the big oak beneath which he found the others waiting. Vasseur, heavy set and full bearded, looking the part of the buccaneer, which he was at heart, came to the point at once. "Well," his deep voice rumbled, "what did you do with Laudonniere?"

"Laudonniere is a very sick man," replied Prevatt, who wanted to tell the story in his own way.

"We know that," replied Vasseur impatiently. "But what did he say. La Roche tells me that you were with him for

nearly an hour."

"He has appointed me in Roget's place."

"Appointed you in Roget's place. For what reason?" Vasseur asked in astonishment.

"I am now next in command to Laudonniere himself," Prevatt said, narrowly watching the effect upon the others.

La Roche, so diminutive in stature that he was called "the runt," squatted on the ground tracing figures in the sand. He studied Prevatt's face for a moment as if to see if he was jesting and merely grunted.

Vasseur wanted more particulars. "Why did Laudonniere do that?" he asked.

Prevatt gave full details of the interview with the commander.

"You left Roget with Laudonniere and think he will not learn all that you have told him?" sneered Vasseur, before Prevatt had entirely finished his story.

"I have Laudonniere's word of honor," Prevatt replied doggedly.

"Great store to be put on a word of honor when your neck is at stake," growled Vasseur.

"What do you mean?" Prevatt asked quickly.

"Have you forgotten that you wrote the letters to Coligny accusing Laudonniere of treason?"

"But I did not sign my name."

"No, but your handwriting is well known to both Laudonniere and Roget. When we return to France it will be Coligny who will demand of Laudonniere an explanation of those letters. Laudonniere will be forced to accuse Roget in order to save himself, and the letters in your handwriting will immediately involve you."

Prevatt looked to La Roche for encouragement, but found none. "I fear you are right, Henri, perhaps I overstepped the mark," he said meekly.

"Overstepped the mark," roared Vasseur, "you have stepped all of us into the halter by your fool work. I do not mind turning pirate for the sake of gold, but what is gold worth if we cannot return to France?"

La Roche vigorously nodded his acquiescence.

"If you had done as we agreed," continued Vasseur, "and merely persuaded Laudonniere to send Roget with a message to the Indians, all would have been well. We could have sailed without him, and disposed of Laudonniere in our own way. Now we must deal with that half Spaniard, too."

Prevatt knew that he must dissemble before these two men whom he held in contempt. They were only tools to be used to mould events to further his own ambition. His presence in New France was after all merely a turn of the wheel of Fortune and since he was here he would play the game trusting to his luck to win. As he spoke his voice carried a tone of humility not at all in keeping with his real feelings.

"I am sorry, Henri," he said patiently. "I did the best I could."

But neither his words nor his manner seemed to satisfy the others.

"Since you are in command—why not arrest Roget?" sneered La Roche.

Prevatt's eyes shot a gleam of hate at the little fellow, but only for a second, and he answered in an even tone. "That is exactly what I intend to do."

Vasseur shrugged his shoulders contemptuously as he took a seat upon a gnarled root of the oak tree. "How long do you suppose the men would stand for his arrest?" he asked. "There is Ottigny and Moissan and their following who could be persuaded to join us if Roget was out of the way, and especially if they thought riches were in store. They might even be made to sacrifice Laudonniere, if necessary. But not so Roget, you can count on him remaining loyal to the commander, and

he will carry the others with him."

There was silence for a moment. "If you are next in command why not send him with a message to Satouriana, the Indian? We can leave before he returns," suggested La Roche.

"There is no excuse for a message to the Indians now, for Satouriana's son is here," and lowering his voice, Prevatt told them of his meeting with the young Indian.

All looked about them as if expecting to see Olata, but there was no one in sight and no sound save the chattering of a squirrel in a clump of palmettos nearby and the song of a mocking bird in the oak above. Had they been skilled in woodcraft, however, they would have recognized in the quarrelling chatter of the squirrel the sign of the near approach of an enemy. In this case the mother squirrel thought her young was in danger, for a dark form was hidden behind the trunk of the palmetto a few feet below the nest and the sharp eyes of Olata were watching every move of these white men, who a voice in the breezes told him, were enemies of the one he called his white brother.

They turned again and each sullenly studied the faces of the others, for each had thoughts that varied only as to their respective points of selfish interest. The words of Vasseur in reference to the letter to Coligny had raised a new fear in Prevatt and he was thinking how he could shift the blame to others. Vasseur knew this and was secretly delighted for he recognized in him the master mind and realized that a contest between them for leadership of the conspirators was inevitable. La Roche on the other hand was not pleased, for he felt that he had not been given the full confidence of the others for the incident of the letter had not been made known to him before. He could not exactly grasp the significance of it all, but it was too late now to start an argument. He had followed the others blindly thus far and he must continue to do so.

On one point, however, they were all agreed, the success of

their plans depended upon mutual loyalty, at least for the present.

Prevatt felt that the time was propitious for him to begin to assume the leadership. He was the first to break the silence. "There is nothing for us to fear," he said with confidence. "Our plans cannot fail. I will take command of one ship with Laudonniere on board. Vasseur, you will take command of the other on which Roget will be held prisoner. La Roche will be with you. It will be your duty to see that the half Spaniard disappears before you have been at sea two days. You will then give me the signal, and I will attend to Laudonniere. The rest will be easy."

Vasseur nodded his assent. He had no better plan to offer, but Prevatt's manner was not to his liking.

La Roche exchanged glances with Vasseur. Prevatt noticed the little fellow's silence and thought to encourage him.

"We have nothing to fear after we have control of the ships," he said. "Within a few months, we will return to France laden with spoils from the Spanish main. What will the King and my Lord Coligny care if we have plenty of Spanish gold? Laudonniere's and Roget's absence can be easily explained. My letter to Coligny will be to our advantage. Think of our entering La Rochelle with our Spanish prizes." He slapped La Roche jovially on the back.

Vasseur arose. "Come, let us get back to the fort," he said. "The first thing for you to do, Prevatt, is to arrest Roget."

"Yes," agreed La Roche, "that's the first thing to do."

"Leave that to me," said Prevatt confidently.

"We will each go back the way we came," he cautioned, as he moved toward the north.

As they separated, the dark figure hidden among the scrub palmetto slipped silently through the wood, and before the rest had fairly started, Olata was at the gate of the fort.

CHAPTER III

THE WHITE BROTHER

Louis Roget came from Laudonniere's room and stood in the gallery that led to the parade. He appeared quite disconsolate and there was a lack of decision in his manner as he looked about him and mechanically felt at his side for his sword which was no longer there.

The door to the room again opened and Charnay appeared. The Chaplain placed his hand affectionately upon Roget's arm and led him to the entrance of the gallery.

"It is beyond me," he said. "I cannot fathom it."

"Can he be in his right mind?" asked Roget, turning appealingly to the other.

"Apparently so," the Chaplain responded. "Although very weak physically—his brain seems to be quite clear. He insists that he be taken on board this afternoon and that we sail tomorrow, yet he will give me no reason for his sudden animosity toward you."

"He asked me for my sword when I returned from the ship, but I thought he was delirious," Roget continued sadly, then remembering more of the circumstances added thoughtfully. "I wonder if Prevatt could have anything to do with all this?"

"Prevatt?" said Charnay in surprise.

"Yes, he was with him when I entered the room."

"What could Prevatt do or say that would make Rene Laudonniere so bitter against one he has always regarded his best friend.

"I don't know."

Charnay studied Roget's face. "You could not have," he began, then hesitated. "No, no, Louis, not that. You could not be guilty of that—"

Roget interrupted him. "What is in your mind, Charnay? Speak out! This is no time to mince words—what is it I could not be guilty of?"

"No, Louis, I am ashamed of the thought. For a moment I wondered if Rene could have believed you are guilty of taking sides with his enemies."

"He should know better," replied Roget with some heat. "Wasn't it I who twice saved him from death at the hands of the mutineers?"

"Yes, it is true, he should know better."

"Perhaps it was something Prevatt told him," Roget paused and his face became very grave, the scar on his cheek assumed a deeper hue, "I wonder if Prevatt is taking sides with Vasseur and his following," he said slowly.

"I never suspected Prevatt of disloyalty," Charnay replied.

"Nor have I, but he has acted peculiarly with me of late. I will find him and I will see."

As Roget started toward the exit, Charnay held out a restraining hand. "Remember, Louis, that Prevatt is now your superior officer. Be careful that you are not guilty of mutiny."

The suggestion appeared to have weight with Roget, for he halted for a second. "Perhaps you are right, Charnay, I will be cautious, but I must know something. This mystery is unbearable." And he strode across the parade as Charnay turned again to the sick room.

At the south portal of the fort he almost collided with Olata who came in a swinging trot, panting and perspiring with exertion. The Indian, usually so calm, was visibly agitated. "Oh, white brother," he said in the language of the Tumucuan, "come with me to the hill, come, quickly."

"Ah, it is you, Olata," Roget responded in the same tongue.

"What is it?"

"I must talk with you," and he caught the white man by the arm and urged him through the gate speaking rapidly as they went. "My mother has spoken to me again. Her voice was in the air. She told me my white brother is in great danger."

It was only a few steps to the forest and through it they went, Olata now leading the way, pushing aside the large leaves of scrub palmetto to make a trail for the white man to follow.

Up the incline to the bluff that lay to the east of the fort they climbed and on the rising ground the thick underbrush gave way to larger growth of oak and magnolia, where walking was easier.

Olata stopped and listened and, as if satisfied, they moved forward through the grove to still higher ground beyond. Neither spoke, the Indian apparently intent on reaching his destination before speaking and Roget being willing to wait to have Olata tell his story in his own way.

Roget had known the young savage since the first day the French had landed near the mouth of the River of May, fourteen months before. Olata had come with his father, Satouriana, to welcome the white men. Satouriana had known Ribault on his first expedition two summers before when the Admiral had treated the Cacique kindly and had promised to come again. Therefore, when the ships of Laudonniere had been sighted and so reported to the Chief, he came with his warriors to the shore and when Laudonniere, Roget and a dozen soldiers landed, the Indians crowded about them with yells of joy, for Satouriana recognized in the French commander the brother of the sun descended from the skies who had come to aid him against his rival Outina. Nearby stood a column of stones graven with the fleur-de-lis planted there by Ribault on his former voyage and had known Satouriana. But as the expedition only remained on the River of May for a short time before proceeding to Port Royal, he had not met Olata.

It was from the first day of the landing, June 25, 1564, that the friendship had existed unbroken between them. During the days when the site was being selected for the fort and during its construction when Satouriana and his men had faithfully aided the Frenchmen, the stalwart son of the Chief had been Roget's constant companion and when later on their expeditions to the west in search of gold the young Indian had always been at his side. In one of these expeditions there had been a serious clash with Outina's band and Roget had saved Olata's life by striking down the enemy who stood over the Indian with upraised tomahawk. Then in his arms he carried the savage to safety and cared for him until he was well. Olata had repaid the debt by constant devotion, and even when the friendship of Satouriana had waned and his warriors had urged open hostilities against the Frenchmen, it was Olata's influence with his father that had saved the colony.

Roget had often visited the village where Satouriana resided and had sat at the right hand of the Chief in his council room. He had early picked up sufficient words of the Tumucuan tongue to be understood and had later, through the tutelage of Olata become quite proficient in this, the particular language of the natives in that section of the country lying south of the River of May.

As they walked through the forest in the shadows of the great trees through which even the bright August sun could not penetrate, Roget looked with admiration upon this splendid specimen of manhood where every muscle in limb and body synchronized in graceful harmony. And with his admiration was coupled a strong affection for the young savage in whom he had found the highest ideals of honor, and today there was a feeling of sadness that this was to be the last of their meetings alone. For many hours of happiness had they spent together surrounded only by nature and exchanging their beliefs in this life and the life to come.

Olata, too, was sad. He had been told that at the rising of another sun the wind would fill the sails and carry the white men away, never to return. He knew that with a heavy heart he would watch the ships fade into the blue from whence they came.

At the crest of the hill a vista opened to them of blue sky and ocean, broken only by the successions of white breakers that rolled lazily toward the hard beach, while beneath them stretched a carpet of green, formed by the scrub palmettos on the slope. To the left lay the unruffled river winding through the marsh lands to the sea.

They sat beneath a live oak that stood upon the edge of the slope and buried its roots in the crumbled coquina shale that formed the base of the ridge. Roget sat with his back against the trunk, and Olata half lay at his feet among the ferns which grew in profusion in the shade. For both of them this spot had been a favorite place to linger. Olata had brought Roget to it in the early days of their acquaintance and he had been charmed with the view, while to the savage it was holy, for here he had told Roget that the voice of his mother had come to him whispering words of love, or when danger threatened, warned him of its approach. But Olata had not told Roget these things in the beginning for they were sacred secrets which only the developed love for the white brother caused him to reveal. The white man knowing that Olata's mother had been dead for many years had at first listened with charitable condescension, smiling inwardly at what he regarded as the superstition of the savage—but as time passed on and he observed in this brave young Indian, whose deeds of courage were heralded even among distant tribes, a gentleness of disposition and nobility of character, he began to wonder.

For a time both gazed far out to where the blue of the sky, paled by the first slanting rays of the afternoon sun, met the deeper glistening blue of the sea. Roget was the first to break

the silence.

"Olata has not yet told me of the message his mother brings," he said. "What is this danger that besets me?"

Olata spoke slowly. "I do not know what the dangers are, but they are many. I know this—that what you expect will not be done."

"Does that mean death?" Roget asked in spite of himself. The events of the day had been so mysterious that the words of the Indian made a cold shiver grip his spine.

Olata shook his head. "I cannot tell."

"At least the uncertainty is encouraging," said Roget, trying to speak lightly.

"If this is death," Olata continued, appearing not to notice the words of the other, "it means death for both of us, for as I grieved last night over your departure, the voice came to me in the call of a night bird and said that my white brother would not leave me."

"Ah, that is good news. That means you will return with me to France," and Roget placed his hand affectionately on the bronze shoulder of the savage. "Come with me, Olata, I will show you La Rochelle and my beloved France. Why can't you come?"

Through the foliage, swaying in the fresh trade wind, bright spots of sunlight flickered across the upturned face of the Indian, his eyes searched the countenance of the white man as if to drink into his very soul a lasting impression. "I wish that I might go with you, my white brother," he murmured, "but I wish more that my white brother might remain with me."

Roget shook his head. "I cannot do that, Olata, my duty is with my people. I must go back to France."

"I know," sighed Olata. "So is my duty with my people," he said, squaring his shoulders proudly. "I am Olata, son of the mighty Satouriana, cacique of the Tribe of Tumucuaus.

It is for me to remain with my people until the great spirit calls."

"Yes, of course," whispered Roget, "each must do his duty. But perhaps we shall meet again here. I may come again, who knows, or if not, then we will meet over there—in Heaven."

"In my Spirit land?" Olata asked eagerly. "They must be the same."

"Yes, they must be the same."

Olata again turned his eyes to the sea. "But I do not believe you will sail toward the rising sun tomorrow," he said, after a pause.

Roget laughed lightly. "Oh, yes, I will. We sail at high tide in the morning."

"But my mother says she will watch over my white brother and me as she has done since my white brother saved my life."

"I am glad," Roget said simply.

"But how can she watch over both of us if the sea divides?"

"I don't know," was all Roget could say.

"My white brother would not take the spirit of my mother away from me?" There was a note of alarm in the Indian's voice as he asked the question.

"No, Olata, of course not, but perhaps distance means nothing in the Spirit world. Even if the sea separated us, she might be with both."

Olata shook his head vigorously. "No, no, the spirit of my mother would not go to your strange land—there you tell me you do not have the mocking bird, nor the palm, nor the magnolia in bloom, nor the perfume of the wild orange blossoms. No, she would not be happy there. It was these things she loved and she must still love them. No, no, she would not go to your strange land."

Roget saw that the conversation was leading into difficult channels for him, a devout follower of the new faith. Charnay would think all this rank superstition and unworthy of a true

believer, yet Roget did not wish to pain his friend by expressing doubt in a matter to him so sacred.

"Very well, Olata," he said very kindly, "the spirit of your mother will remain with you, I know, if she is listening now—"

Olata bowed his head reverently and whispered, "Yes, she is listening now."

"Then," continued Roget, "she can hear me speak and she will know that I consider all obligations on your part to me fully paid and she need not feel that she should aid me further."

But this did not seem to satisfy the Indian. "My white brother does not seem to understand Olata," he persisted. "It is his own safety I seek also. It is my mother who protects him from danger. Even today as I passed through the woods near the fort and I met the one you call Prevatt, she spoke to me and made me follow him and watch, for he was your enemy. I did so, and following his trail I saw him meet with two others beneath the oaks—there," and he pointed to the southwest.

This announcement, following the events of the morning in which Prevatt seemed to play so important a part, was very interesting to Roget.

"Who were the others?" he asked eagerly.

"The one who has much beard and would fight against his own brothers many moons ago."

"Vasseur?"

"Yes, that is the name he is called. And the other is he who says little, is very small and has the brown spots on his face."

"La Roche?"

"Yes, that is the name."

"What did they do?"

"I could not understand much they said, but they called your name often and the great white chief's and I know that they plot to kill you."

"So Prevatt has joined the mutineers," Roget said to himself. Then to Olata, "what did they do finally?"

"When they parted, I hurried to reach you and bring you here. If you go with them on the trip Olata will see his white brother no more in this world. Of this I am sure, but my mother says that my white brother and I will remain together, so I know that you will not go on the ship."

Roget pondered deeply over the situation. He knew that the act of Laudonniere in deposing him from his command was somehow connected with the machinations of Prevatt, and if Prevatt was in league with Vasseur, the leader of the worst element of the colony, it would probably mean his own destruction. Yet there was no way out of it, he must bravely face the issue, even if it meant his death. "There is nothing else I can do," he said finally. "I must go with them."

"My people will come for you," suggested Olata.

"Come for me! What do you mean?"

"My father, Satouriana, and I will come with his warriors at daylight and take my white brother from your enemies, and my white brother will come and live with me and rule my people with me when Satouriana has gone to the Spirit world."

Roget looked upon the sad and stolid countenance of the savage as he said these words and realized the compliment that he paid, for from this standpoint there could be none greater. Tears welled to the white man's eyes as he affectionately stroked the coarse, jet black hair of the red man. "I thank you, my brother," he said in a broken voice, "but it cannot be. Even as you believe that the spirit of your mother looks over and protects you, so do I believe that there is a Great God who marks the destinies of His children and that if it is intended that I go to my destruction, I must go. Such fate as is in store for me, that shall I receive. It is so ordered, it cannot be otherwise." Roget arose from his seat by the trunk of the

tree and turned his face away from the Indian to hide his emotion. Olata also arose and as if understanding, strolled a few steps beyond the shadow of the oak.

Suddenly he made a quick exclamation of surprise and shading his eyes looked out to sea. "Look, look!" he cried. "Ships—many of them," and he counted seven on his fingers.

Roget rushed to his side and looked in the direction the Indian pointed. At first blinded by the glare he could see nothing, but finally as his eyes became accustomed to the bright light he made them out—seven vessels, three large ones and four smaller, bearing down upon the mouth of the River of May. The hill upon which he stood was about three miles from the river's mouth and the ships were two leagues beyond, their white sails glistening in the afternoon sun standing out in bold relief against the blue.

Roget viewed these visitors from civilization with mingled hope and fear. Who were they? Were they French bringing succor to the starved colony? A thrill of joy passed over him at the thought. Or were they English on a friendly mission such as Sir John Hawkins had proved to be? Or were they neither friend nor foe? Suppose they were Spaniards? Sir John Hawkins had reported that France and Spain were at peace, but Roget did not trust the Spaniards. Remembering his early experience in Avilles, hatred and dread filled his heart. Then he thought of the colony's unprotected condition. All the heavier cannons had been given to Sir John Hawkins in exchange for supplies and a ship. Only two field pieces were left. The half starved crew, poorly disciplined, ready to mutiny and without means of protection in the partly dismantled fort would be an easy prey to an enemy. All thought of his own safety was forgotten in his concern for the colony. "I must hurry to the fort and apprise my comrades," he said taking a last look at the oncoming fleet.

"I will go with you," Olata said, moving by his side.

At the fort all was quiet, no sign that anyone knew of the near approach of what might mean utter destruction to the wretched remains of French efforts at colonization—of the proximity of fire and steel that would mean death to all.

From the river below came the shouts of men, good natured banter being exchanged between those on the wharf and on the brigantine at anchor and those on the shallops that were placing on board the last articles to be taken away.

Suddenly it occurred to Roget that he had been deprived of his command and that Prevatt had been placed in his stead. Should he report to him or should he go direct to Laudonniere? Perhaps the latter had been taken on board. Time was essential for the best state of defense possible should be made in case his worst fears were realized. But he did not trust Prevatt and he could not bring himself to be the first to recognize his authority, especially at this time. Then he thought of Charnay, dear old Charnay, always a present help in time of need. Yes, he would consult Charnay, but he must hurry.

Through the south portal of the fort they went, and he bade Olata to wait at the entrance to the gallery of the officers' quarters. Charnay was not in his own room, which was the one occupied by Roget also. He did not relish the idea of facing Laudonniere again so soon after the painful interview of the previous hour, but there was nothing else to do. There being no answer to his light knock, he cautiously opened the door to his room and beheld Charnay kneeling by the bedside. Laudonniere was sitting upright with his back against the head piece, his elbow resting on his knee and his right hand covering his eyes. Charnay was praying, and as Roget heard the prayer he realized that the Chaplain was supplicating for him, asking the Supreme Being so to guide Laudonniere, their commander, in his judgment that justice might be dealt to one who had been faithful to him in all his trials and that mercy might temper justice.

As Roget, unnoticed by the others, listened to the words of his friend, he began to fully realize the seriousness of his own case, the antagonistic attitude of Laudonniere toward him and the lengths to which Charnay must have been driven in his defense.

The prayer ended, the Chaplain arose and Laudonniere looked up as Roget advanced. The latter noticed the sudden change in the commander's countenance as his eyes rested upon him and he felt there was little there to designate that the prayer had been answered. However, he did not wait for the outburst that he felt would inevitably come, but promptly saluted and said, "A fleet of seven vessels is approaching the mouth of the river."

Laudonniere's face presented a succession of lights and shadows as if caused by passing clouds. First he looked at Roget in dumb astonishment, then, as the possibilities of succor flashed through his brain, his expression bespoke joy; then the thought of dangers it might mean made him shiver with dread; and then it occurred to him that the announcement might be a trick of Roget's to further his own schemes toward supplanting him in his leadership; the cold gleam returned to his eyes and his lips curled with scorn.

"Have you reported the fact to your superior officer, Captain Prevatt?" he asked with a sneer.

"No," Roget answered quietly, "I thought a matter of such importance should be reported to the Commander. Besides I did not know where I could find Captain Prevatt, and I regarded time as an essential in putting the fort in the best defense possible."

Charnay, a silent observer of the scene, realized more than either of the others the seriousness of the situation. For an hour he had labored with Laudonniere to tell him the cause of his sudden antipathy for Roget, but without success. Laudonniere had maintained a dogged silence, contending that

Roget had proven himself unworthy of further trust and that it was for the best interest of the colony that he be deposed. He would say no more. It was even with great difficulty that he had succeeded in having Roget's arrest postponed, and that only with the understanding that he, Charnay, would personally answer for the person and good behavior of the former captain. Charnay knew that Roget would not lie in announcing the approach of the fleet and fully realized the dangers which confronted the colony if the newcomers should prove to be enemies and with Laudonniere ill that Roget would be the only leader to be relied upon in such a crisis. In his capacity of physician he considered his position sufficiently secure to step into the breach.

"What reason have you to think they may be enemies?" he asked Roget.

"There was no flag in sight. If they were French coming to our rescue, I can see no reason why they should hide their colors."

"Good reasoning," observed Charnay, and turning to Laudonniere. "Sir, I beg of you, consider the dangers that confront us. Remember the loyalty of Louis Roget in the past. You know that the men have confidence in him. Place him in command, I implore you, it may mean our very lives."

Charnay's serious tone seemed to impress Laudonniere. Perhaps Roget spoke the truth. Suppose there were enemy ships approaching? What might be the consequences? But he remembered the story of Prevatt and the fear of mutiny and the usurpation of his own authority decided him. "No," he said fiercely. "I will take command myself," and he sat upon the side of the bed.

Charnay sprang to him. "You cannot, you are too weak."

But the intrepid Commander with almost superhuman will arose and though tottering as he walked, called Piere to come and assist him to dress. Charnay beseeched him to remain

quiet, but Laudonniere ordered him away.

"Go tell Prevatt to sound the call to arms, and then report to me here with two men and a stretcher," he commanded. "Take Roget with you and go to the hill, reconnoiter and report to me. Remember, Roget is in your charge. You are responsible for his good conduct."

"I will vouch for that," Charnay replied earnestly, "but suppose Prevatt attempts his arrest?"

"Write another order countermanding his arrest for the present, I will sign it."

Charnay wrote the order as he was bidden, while Piere assisted Laudonniere, who held to a chair for support.

Charnay presented the order for Laudonniere's signature and beckoning to Roget, the two silently withdrew.

At the entrance to the gallery, Roget looked about for Olata, but he had disappeared.

CHAPTER IV

THE STRANGERS

The watchers on the bluff sent a courier to Laudonniere with the information that four large vessels had anchored outside but that three caravels had boldly crossed the bar and were proceeding up the river. It was evident to Charnay and Roget that the Admiral of the fleet must be quite familiar with these waters or was a man of courage closely approaching fool-hardiness to proceed with so little caution. No flag had yet been displayed nor other signal given that would suggest their identity, and as the two men watched the boats with their broad bows, high, narrow poops and tub-like proportions moving slowly up the tortuous channel through the marshland they nervously debated the possibilities of the coming of the strangers. If they were French, they must surely know of the location of Fort Caroline and what their coming would mean to the colonists, therefore the Fleur-de-Lis would be plainly visible. If they proved to be English, in all probability their attitude would be friendly, as in the case of Sir John Hawkins, but if they were Spaniards, the outlook was problematical. Roget and Charnay knew that Catholic Spain had no love for the French Huguenots and that there was little protection to be expected from his Catholic Majesty, Charles IX of France, when matters of religion were the points of difference between his subjects and King Phillip. But if the visitors were of either nation, there would be no reason for hiding their identity. There was only one solution, they were pirates, roving buccaneers seeking spoils wherever they found them and there was

little hope that the visit would be a peaceful one.

As the three caravels came nearer, Charnay and Roget could plainly see the decks crowded with men in armor. There was no doubt now. They were enemies and their object was the capture of Fort Caroline. So they hurried to the fort in order to make a report to Laudonniere and to aid in what they realized would be a feeble effort of defense.

On their way Charnay had an opportunity to give Roget a bare outline of his hour with the Commander. It had been a constant appeal for justice, for consideration of all that Roget had done in the past and finally a plea that he, Roget, might be advised of the reason for the sentence that had been imposed upon him. But to it all Laudonniere had turned a deaf ear, absolutely refusing to either listen to any defense from Roget or to advise him the reason for his action. Charnay suggested that new events incident to the appearance of an enemy might change the attitude of Laudonniere. But in this they found he was mistaken.

When they reached the fort they found all excitement there. A hurried call had been made for those on board the brigantine to come ashore, leaving the vessels at the mercy of the enemy, should they prove to be such. Laudonniere had been brought upon a stretcher to the rampart and was personally giving his commands through Prevatt. Ammunition, the supply of which had been greatly depleted by fourteen months continued drain, was being sparingly issued to the arquebuses, and a portion allotted to the only two remaining cannons which had been hastily mounted. The arquebuses were placed at points of advantage along the wall nearest the river and pikemen stationed at the weaker places where entrance would probably be attempted.

Charnay and Roget found Laudonniere flushed with fever and excitement but too weak to stand, supported by Piere, as he encouraged his men to greater exertions. Enthused by the

sight of their leader, they were bending every effort for preparation against the invaders who had just come in sight around the point of the bluff.

Laudonniere received the report from Charnay, appearing to take no notice of Roget who stood apart, waiting with embarrassment for an order from the Commander. But none came. Prevatt passed near but he also failed to see the deposed Captain. Roget looked about him and wondered what his men thought of his being no longer in command, but there was no time for him to ask questions or to consider else but the immediate danger that confronted them. He almost wished that Prevatt had given him an order to get in line with the common soldiers, anything but this apparent ostracism. Then it occurred to him that his official position was that of a paroled prisoner in charge of Charnay and he followed his keeper who was just descending to the parade, Charnay's offer of assistance having been refused by Laudonniere.

Roget asked Charnay for the privilege of serving with the pikemen, and the Chaplain not only assented, but insisted that he also join them, although up to this time he had never been called upon to bear arms. They took their station near the west angle in easy reach of the gate and protected by a flank of the bastion from the fire of the enemy.

In the meantime, the caravels had anchored at a point a little way up the river from the bluff and the watcher at the fort could see boats being lowered and filled with soldiers. These boats bristling with weapons were soon moving toward the wharf. A sentinel stationed in the woods near the river bank fired his arquebus, and still there was no response. Laudonniere had the two cannons trained on the forward boat and was about to give the command to fire when a shout was heard from the boats and the words "Vive la France" could be distinctly heard in the deathlike stillness. Then, before the astonished eyes of the garrison, the Fleur-de-Lis floated in the

breeze.

Those on the fort stood dumb in the face of this seemingly miraculous manifestation. They looked at one another in bewilderment and then a shout of joy rang forth, awakening the echoes in the forest and floating out across the waters. From the boats came an answering shout.

All discipline in the fort was forgotten, the defenders crowding to the wharf to meet the oncoming boats bearing the first message from France. The long silence of sixteen months would now be broken. The hunger for news from home would be appeased. The cannons so recently trained to destroy the strangers boomed a welcoming salute.

Charnay and Roget laid aside their pikes and joined the ragged, motley mob that seemed frantic with joy as they rushed pell mell upon the dock until it seemed that its timbers would break under the weight. Others lined the waters edge while some waded out into the stream with outstretched arms. Help had come at last. Admiral Coligny had kept his pledge. As they learned later, there were seven ships, three hundred men besides the crew, artisans with their families, stores and supplies, agricultural implements, seeds, everything necessary for successfully planting a colony. Thus rescue had reached the famished colony just ready to give up and return to France.

Laudonniere was borne on his stretcher to welcome the newcomers. The Indians, who at first sight of the vessels had paddled their canoes to a safe distance up the river, now returned to learn the meaning of the sudden change in the attitude of the garrison toward the newcomers.

Standing in the bow of the first boat, distinguished by his long flowing beard, could be seen Admiral Jean Ribault, with whom many of the colonists had served in the first expedition to New France. In him, even the Indians recognized an old friend and they mingled their joyous whoops with the shouts of the white men.

For the moment, Roget forgot his own troubles at the sight of his old commander and involuntarily started forward to welcome him when he landed, but he met Prevatt face to face, who surily ordered that the wharf be cleared. This brought Roget to a realization of his own distressing position and he turned with Charnay to leave the dock. Then he found that he was even to be deprived of the companionship of his friend, for Prevatt announced that Laudonniere commanded the presence of the Chaplain by his side to receive the Admiral. So Roget mingled with the crowd, many of them speaking respectfully to him, probably wondering at his change of fortune, a few, among who were Vasseur and La Roche, seeming to mock him with their sneers. This brought to mind the story of Olata, and as he took a position near the bank beside the path where he could see all that was transpiring, he especially noted Vasseur and La Roche covetly signalling or conversing with others of the mutineers.

Everything seemed weird and strange to Roget. Events in the past few hours had followed in such rapid succession that his fagged brain, supported by a body weak from lack of proper nourishment, could not grasp the meaning of it all. In the morning he had enjoyed the full trust and confidence of his commanding officer, and upon his shoulders had rested the responsibility of saving a band of discouraged men, whose only thought seemed to be that of returning to France. Now all this was changed. Almost in the twinkling of an eye the responsibility had been taken from him. He had been deprived of the reward of years of service, disgraced and reduced to the rank of a subaltern, in fact, a prisoner on parole. And for what reason? Was Laudonniere under the influence of these mutineers?

And the coming of Admiral Ribault, their savior. It meant that they would not sail on the morrow. Olata was right, he and his white brother would not separate. And how strange

was the arrival of these friends from France, who but a few moments before were thought to be enemies. Why the hostile attitude as they approached? He had seen the arquebusiers standing in the boat with lighted matches, and even now as he watched Admiral Ribault standing on the dock with his soldiers around him there was an air of caution as if they were on the alert for the unexpected. Roget could not fathom the mystery.

The continued demonstrations of joy upon the part of the garrison seemed, however, to satisfy the new arrivals, for Ribault received Laudonniere's welcome cordially and the soldiers soon mingled with the others, old friends embracing and showing every evidence of affection and delight at their arrival.

In a few moments Ribault started for the fort with Laudonniere borne on the stretcher by his side. Prevatt and Charney immediately behind and several of Ribault's soldiers bringing up the rear. The procession passed a few feet from Roget and he thought with bitterness of the fate that had deprived him of the honor of escorting his old commander. When he turned his eyes again to the dock to watch the landing of the second boat, the leader of the boat had already stepped ashore and stood facing him. Roget started and gazed intently at the figure.

"By my life, I believe it is Alphonse Darboux," he muttered.

The officer came slowly down the dock, the plume in his hat waving in the breeze, as his eyes earnestly noted the strange scene before him. When he reached the end of the dock, Roget stepped into the path and a look of recognition came into the stranger's face.

"Louis Roget!" he exclaimed, and the greeting between the two men was like brothers long separated.

In fact, the affection that existed between Chevalier Alphonse Darboux and Louis Roget was even as great as that

which often exists between brothers. Each had found the other tried and true. Their friendship had continued unbroken since the days when they were companions in arms under the Prince Conde in the Civil War following the death of Henry II. Later they had together endured the same hardships in the religious wars; when France was gripped with the wild orgy of hate and fanaticism; when altars were profaned and hearthstones made desolate; when friend was engaged in mortal combat with friend, brother with brother, father with son. Together they had served under Ribault in his first expedition to Port Royal, and it was only at the request of Gaspar de Coligny himself, who had persuaded Darboux to remain in his service in France, that he had not accompanied Roget on the second expedition.

Darboux noted Roget's depressed attitude and attributed it to the fact that Ribault had not come sooner to the rescue of the colony.

"Do not blame us, Louis, until you have heard," he said, resting his hand affectionately on the arm of his friend.

"I do not blame you, Alphonse," Roget replied. "I am only glad that you have come at last." Then, remembering the unfortunate position he was in, he added sadly: "But I fear you find me in a bad plight, Alphonse. For some reason our Commander Laudonniere has deprived me of my rank."

"Deprived you of your rank?" Darboux asked in astonishment. "What does Laudonniere mean by such action? What have you done?"

"I know not."

Darboux impatiently dug the toe of his shoe into the soft sand. "I do not understand Rene Laudonniere," he said angrily. "In truth, he has much to answer for to Admiral Ribault."

Roget looked at him in surprise. These were strange words regarding his commander. "What do you mean?" he asked

quickly.

Darboux looked about him cautiously. The third boat had landed and soldiers were everywhere, mingling with the garrison, renewing old acquaintances, or curiously watching the Indians who particularly interested the newcomers. Standing as they were close to the path the two men were constantly in danger of being overheard by those passing.

"Can we go to some place where it will be more private?" said Darboux in a low voice. "I have some questions to ask you."

"We will go to my quarters," said Roget as they proceeded up the path toward the fort.

"The Admiral has ordered me to make certain investigations," Darboux explained confidentially as they walked. "I will begin by interrogating you."

"Dear Alphonse, I will tell you all I know, but that is very little, only gloomy words of our experiences here in New France. It is well that you did not arrive a day later, tomorrow we were to sail for 'home.'"

"Tomorrow?"

"Yes, tomorrow. And probably we would have passed at sea, neither one of us knowing, and then another year without our meeting. Surely, God has been good."

"Yes," said Darboux devoutly, "God is indeed merciful to His children."

He noticed the chapel at the right of the path. "I see that you observe the teaching, 'where a few are gathered'."

"Yes," replied Roget. "Charnay holds meetings regularly. There are some among us I fear who are not overly strong in the faith, but—why tell you of our troubles here? You tell me how goes our cause at home."

"There have been great happenings in France since you went away, Louis. After the death of the Duke of Guise, our party prospered. The bullet of the faithful Huguenot removed our

most powerful enemy, thank God the massacre of Vassy was at least partially avenged. Now Coligny is a power at Court, but he does not trust the Queen Mother and the King has no mind of his own. Peace has been declared but peace between Huguenot and Catholic will not continue long while Catherine de Medici holds sway.

"Does Admiral Coligny feel that way also?"

"Yes, though he has been able to obtain special concessions for us here. It is his hope to build in this land a New France where those of our faith may worship God without political interference."

"God grant that he may succeed," Roget said fervently. "But it means great labor and sacrifice. We who have been here these many months know what it is to suffer."

They had reached the top of the slope near the main portal of the fort. Darboux turned and surveyed the surroundings. He cast his eye over the rude structure used as a defense and saw what a weak dependence it would be in case of attack by a powerful enemy. Then he turned his eyes to the north and let them rest upon the river which stretched westward, its bosom rippled by a stiff easterly breeze, its farther shore fringed by heavy woodland. The late afternoon sun bathed the landscape in a mellow light turning the brown marsh grass along the nearer shore into a shadowy gray and softening the green of the distant forest into a hazy mauve. A mocking bird from a branch of a neighboring tree filled the air with joyous song. The heat had decreased as the shadows lengthened and the ocean breeze aided to make the temperature spring-like in its mildness.

Darboux stood with bared head and drank in the fresh ozone. "It is a goodly country," he said. "The light of God's countenance seems to shine upon it. I believe that He will bless His people here."

"Yes, but we must build permanently," Roget said earnestly.

"We have thus far made the mistake of seeking riches first, when we should have first established homes. We need men with families, people to build, not adventurers—"

Darboux interrupted, "Ah, Louis, wait, I have not told you. We have them. On board our ships there are many families. Even I have brought mine. By brother is with me, and Adele—you remember Adele?"

"Surely I remember Adele," Roget said enthusiastically. "It was five years ago. I remember the afternoon when I last saw her. I was in La Rochelle. She and her mother were going south with the others to escape the persecutions during the reign of King Francis."

"Yes," said Darboux, "she was only a girl then, now she is a woman." His voice softened. "You knew we lost our mother?"

"No, I did not know."

"Yes, it was at Vassy. They were attending worship in a barn. The Duke of Guise passed with his retainers and learned of the meeting and attempted to break it up. Our people defended themselves as best they could and the Duke was struck by a stone, whereupon his soldiers rushed in and slew all who could not escape. My mother was run through by one of the ruffians of Francis of Guise. Adele was trampled upon and left for dead, but thank God she recovered. I could not leave her in France alone, so she is here."

Roget pressed Darboux's hand. "Is it not a coincidence, Alphonse, that both your mother and mine should have been victims of ruthless bigotry? But I am glad that Adele and Ernest are here with you, here in this wonderful country where God speaks in every whisper of the wind and in the perfume of the flowers. Here they can live and worship without fear of Rome and its cruel persecutions."

Darboux sighed, "I am not so sure, Louis, that all will always be well. There is still a cloud on the horizon. Just as we

sailed from Dieppe, there came a message from Admiral Coligny stating that Don Pedro Manendez of Avilles had set sail from Spain with a large fleet and that his destination was New France. Coligny admonished us that we should not encroach upon him nor should we allow him to encroach upon us. I hope that his mission will be a peaceful one, and that we can dwell in the same land as friends. But you know the Spaniards. They are not to be trusted."

Roget's face hardened. The scar on his cheek reddened and the seams appeared drawn. "Yes," he said harshly, "I know the Spaniards too well, and I know of Don Pedro Menendez. There is no mercy to be expected from him."

"But of course that is a matter to be settled when it comes," said Darboux philosophically. "Let us now attend to the affairs we have in hand."

They turned and entered the fort. The parade was well filled with soldiers, some curiously examining the ramparts and defenses, others the pine logs and thatched palmetto leaves which formed the roofs of the soldier's quarters, all very strange to these sons of France who were burning with desire to learn everything concerning the new country where so many intended to make their homes.

Roget and Darboux crossed the enclosure to the officers' quarters.

"Tell me, Alphonse," Roget said abruptly, "what was the reason for the hostile demonstration as you come up the river?"

At the same instant Prevatt was leaving Laudonniere's room and caught the question as he was closing the door. He had heard the same question propounded by Laudonniere to Ribault, to which the Admiral had replied with the suggestion that such matters had best be discussed privately, and as he had been summarily dismissed from the room by Laudonniere, he was very curious to hear Darboux's answer.

Roget saw Prevatt at the moment and made a sign to Dar-

boux for silence, but Darboux did not catch the meaning and said, "That deals with the very things I wish to talk with you about."

They passed Prevatt who nonchalantly strolled across the porch as if paying no attention to them, but as they entered Roget's room, he quickly retraced his steps to his own, which was next to Roget's and cautiously opening the door, silently entered and placing his ear against the thin partition, prepared to hear all that was being said in the adjoining room.

Roget's quarters, like Laudonniere's was almost bare of furniture, all that was worth moving having been placed on board the brigantine. Only two chairs and the rough couches upon which he and Charnay slept remained. Darboux surveyed the room and its appointments. "Not very extravagant in your tastes, by dear Louis," he said jovially.

"No," replied Roget, "I wish I had more to offer."

Darboux laughed. "It will be different now, Louis, we can provide you with many things you need. But let us get to business," he continued as he took one of the chairs. "I will tell you the reason why we approached with such caution. We feared resistance from you."

"Feared resistance from us?" Roget gasped. "Why should you expect resistance from us when we have been praying for your coming?"

"We suspected Laudonniere of treason."

Roget pushed aside the chair he was about to occupy, "Alphonse Darboux, do not talk to me in riddles. Speak plainly, what do you mean?"

Darboux came to the point. "The ship returning to France last year brought a letter to Admiral Coligny stating that Laudonniere was preparing to make himself King of New France."

"It's a lie," exclaimed Roget.

"So I believed, and I told my Lord Coligny and Admiral Ribault so, but we were obliged to take no chances but to be

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prepared to make war if necessary."

For the moment Roget forgot the injustice done Laudonniere.

"The idea is preposterous," he asserted vigorously. "Laudonniere has only the interests of the King and Admiral Coligny at heart at all times. He has suffered with the rest of us, lived on herbs, eaten snakes to keep from starving, been the victim of mutinies—but through it all he has been steadfast."

Darboux smiled at Roget's earnestness. "He does not seem to be very faithful to you, Louis Roget. I know of the sacrifices you have made for me in the past, and for our cause. No one could tell me that you had been unfaithful to Laudonniere, yet he has deprived you of your command, tried to disgrace you—and for what?"

"I know not," Roget replied doggedly. "Perhaps it is the fever, I cannot tell. It matters not as to my own case, Alphonse, but I'd stake my life that Rene Laudonniere has never had a thought of usurping any authority not delegated to him by his superiors."

"You are a true and loyal friend, Louis, and a good soldier, but your first allegiance is not to Laudonniere. By order of the King, Admiral Ribault is now Commander of Fort Caroline. Unless Laudonniere can prefer charges against you and maintain them, you will be reinstated, I am sure."

Roget bowed his thanks.

"But," continued Darboux, "if Laudonniere is not guilty of treason, some one here is guilty of a grave offense in so charging him. Do you know of anyone here by the name of Francis Cavaignac?"

"There is no one in the garrison by that name."

"Nor could we find a record of any such name in the original list," Darboux said, extracting a paper from his pocket. "I have a letter here Admiral Ribault gave me to make an investigation. Perhaps you can tell me if you know the hand-

IN FLORIDA'S DAWN

“ ”
He took the proffered paper and stepped to the window. In the light he carefully examined it.

“Yes,” he said finally, “the writing is Jean Prevatt’s.”

“You are sure?”

“Absolutely positive, there can be no mistaking it, though there is an attempt at disguise.”

“But the letter mentions Prevatt and one Vasseur as loyal subjects of the King.”

Roget laughed scornfully. “I am at last beginning to understand some things which have been a mystery. Prevatt has been next in command to me. I found him in Laudonniere’s room when I entered there today. I was immediately deposed and he was put in my place. Vasseur has been the ring leader in several mutinies. Today Prevatt, Vasseur and another insubordinate fellow named La Roche met secretly in the forest. I had not suspected Prevatt before today but now I am sure he is hand in glove with the rebellious element.”

“We will have him arrested at once,” Darboux said as he arose

Roget stood for a moment in deep study fingering the letter. “No, Alphonse, if you will allow me to make a suggestion, I think there is a better way. The arrest of Prevatt at this time would be very embarrassing to Laudonniere. He is, as you know, very impulsive. Prevatt also knowing this, evidently took advantage of his illness and has prejudiced him against me. The arrest of Prevatt now would advise every one of Laudonniere’s error which would be a hard blow to his proud spirit. Let me take the letter to him—he knows Prevatt’s handwriting—the sight of it will immediately prove to him that he has made a mistake and he will be quick to make amends. Then he himself can have Prevatt arrested.”

Darboux looked with admiration at the tall figure standing near the window. “I fear that Rene Laudonniere would not

return good for evil as you are doing."

"I think he would," Roget said simply.

"Very well, have it your way, Louis. But, be careful with the letter. It was entrusted to me by Admiral Ribault so be sure you return it to me safely."

"Have no fear on that score."

It was getting dark in the room as the sun had almost set.

"I must be preparing to return to the caravel," Darboux said, moving toward the door. "Come with me to the wharf, or better still, come on board with me and meet Adele and Ernest. Have a meal with me. We will drink to old France and to New France—come."

The invitation was quite acceptable to Roget for many reasons. To again meet Adele Darboux—that thought had been running in his mind since the first mention of her name. And a meal—he had not eaten to satisfaction for months, nor had he tasted other than the fermented juice of the wild grape in a year. His suggestion that he should see Laudonniere immediately was not strongly put.

"You can see him upon your return," Darboux readily urged. "I will not keep you late and will send you back to the wharf."

"Then I will go," he said as he placed the letter carefully in his pocket.

Darboux donned his discarded armor and together they left the room, while from the other side of the partition, Prevatt nervously listened to their receding steps as they crossed the gallery.

CHAPTER V

THE DUNGEON

Roget noted an air of change about the fort. He found a new face on post at the main gate and the sentinel saluted Darboux who stopped to inquire the latest news. Ribault had assumed full command of the colony. He had placed Verdier, one of his lieutenants in charge of the fort and had returned on board ship for the night. Captain Laudonniere was confined to his room, and while Darboux and Roget had been conferring, Charnay had held services in the Chapel giving thanks for the safe arrival of the fleet.

As they passed through the gate of the fort, the sun was just setting. Darboux stood in admiration as his eye caught the dazzling beauty of the scene before him. The great ball of fire was just touching the horizon, nestling in a ragged bank of gold and silver lined clouds, through which shafts of yellow light streaked the sky, blending the azure into iridescence.

Roget watched the effect on Darboux. To him it was a scene not uncommon, though there were never two sunsets alike, and he never failed to feel as well as to see their wondrous beauty. Olata said that these sunsets were the smiles of the Great Spirit upon the world for the good deeds of the day. To Darboux it was a picture of Nature's painting that thrilled him to the soul. He removed his hat and in a solemn voice quoted: "The Heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." When the sun had finally disappeared and only the emblazoned sky marked its for-

mer place they passed down the hill to the wharf where Darboux's men lounged about, rather impatiently waiting for their leader to come that they might return to the caravel. The scene on the wharf was quite different from that earlier in the day. The place was practically deserted, the Indians had gone, paddling their light canoes under the shore, beneath the gathering shadows. Two sentinels now paced the dock—Ribault was taking no chances.

As Darboux obtained the password for Roget it occurred to the latter that his absence from the fort without leave under present conditions might prove embarrassing and so stated to his friend, but the other laughed at his fears and said that he would make everything right with Ribault. Thus assured, Roget took his seat in the shallop beside Darboux and they were soon aboard the caravel.

Roget's pulse quickened at the thought of meeting Adele Darboux. It had been sixteen months since his eyes had rested upon a white woman. That the first after so long a time should be one in whom he had been interested since he had first known her as a child in the home of his friend in La Rochelle made the prospect of the meeting especially delightful. As a constant visitor in the Darboux home, he had watched Adele, the child, grow into girlhood and had noted her blossoming beauty. He wondered if her comeliness had increased with the years during which the fortunes of war had prevented their meeting.

Ernest Darboux met them as they came on deck and greeted Roget cordially, who did not at first recognize him, for five years make considerable change between the ages of fifteen and twenty. The young man led the way to the cabin in the poop. As they crossed the waist, Roget noticed a knot of women crowded at the larboard bulwark gazing out upon the placid river, in which was mirrored a new moon, its feeble light just beginning to compete with the afterglow of the sun. He could hear their shrill voices calling to others in the cara-

vels anchored near by, but were suddenly hushed as they listened in awe to the bellowing of a bull alligator in the marsh. Roget wished that the first sound of a woman's voice after the long silence could have been Adele's.

But they found her in the cabin, and by the dim light of the lamp that swung from the ceiling, he could mark the tall, slim figure and could hear the soft, melodious voice that recalled so many pleasant memories. But the full effect of her wondrous eyes under the long lashes, eyes which were neither gray nor blue, but like the violet mingled the two, and her perfect features beneath the jet black hair, all of which he remembered so well, were lost to him in the dimness of the light.

There was nothing stilted in the meeting. She called him Louis as of yore, greeted him in the same sisterly fashion as had been her wont. The four talked of old days, the happy ones, for no mention was made of aught that would awaken unhappy memories. They drank toasts to France, to Admiral Ribault, to the success of his new adventure, and to each of those present, but to Adele most of all. It seemed to Roget that every toast carried an invitation for another helping; certainly the long felt wants of a year's famine were well filled.

It was late when he recalled the fact that he must get back to the fort if he expected to see Laudonniere that night, for he knew that Charnay was a stern disciplinarian when it came to his patients, though he had not been able to exert his power with Laudonniere this day. To his suggestion that he must go the others raised a protest but finally upon his continual urgent appeals, Alphonse gave orders to man the boat to take him back to the wharf.

As the shallop moved away from the caravel, Roget distinguished outlined against the starlit sky the forms of his three friends standing on the high poop deck and could hear their cheerful *au revairs* and the promising to see him in the morning. He settled back in his seat in the stern of the boat and

the regular dip of the oars lulled him into restfulness. He thought of the happiness of the evening in contradistinction to the tribulations of the day. Now, no longer need he fear Prevatt and his conspirators. Let Laudonniere believe what he might concerning him, Alphonse Darboux was his friend, and Darboux was next in command to Ribault, and Ribault would see that justice was done and that he was restored to the rank of which he was so unjustly deprived. From the nightmare of famine and want he had been suddenly awakened into a new day of happiness, and Adele was the lone star of his dreams. She had turned a wilderness into a paradise.

The sentinel's challenge aroused him from these pleasing thoughts. The shallop scraped the wharf and he disembarked bidding a cheerful good night to the sentinels and the men who had brought him ashore. The path to the fort was well marked by the white sand which constant traffic during the day had turned over the vegetation. He had just reached the curve where the path wound beneath the grove of palmettos near the Chapel, when he was attracted by the sudden crackling of a twig immediately behind him. He turned quickly and beheld a form so close to him that he could have touched it. And in the dim starlight he could see an upraised arm and the flash of steel as the arm descended. He tried to move but the action was so quick that it seemed that his limbs were lifeless, his twisted neck seemed frozen to his shoulders which would not respond to his will. He could remember afterward of the sensation of waiting for the knife to strike. Then, like lightning, another body hurtled through the air, just as the descending knife ripped the ruff and almost grazed his neck. The two bodies rolled on the ground. There was a brief struggle—so brief that he could not intervene—then a dull thud—a groan—and Olata stood before him.

"My mother spoke again tonight," he said breathing hard. "She bade me save my white brother from the knife of his

enemy. I have done so." And the Indian slipped away in the darkness.

It was a moment before Roget could collect his wits, then he called Olata, but the only answer was the screech of the owl, and he knew that it was the Indian and that he would not return, for the call of the screech owl was the warning of silence.

He bent over the body and found that there was life remaining. It was too dark to discern the features but he knew that the face was covered with a coarse beard. Perhaps he could save this life, but there was no time to be lost. He strained at the dead weight, finally succeeding in getting the body across his shoulders and staggered up the hill to the fort. The sentinel challenged and gazed in astonishment as Roget gave the password and stumbled forward and dropped the body at his feet.

"Help! A light, quick! Someone is hurt," he panted.

The sentinel brought a torch from within the wall. Roget, his shoulder stained with blood from the wounded man, bent over the body. "It is Vasseur," he said arising and thoughtfully passing his hands across his forehead.

So the conspirators were willing to go to the extent of removing him. He could not quite understand why this should be necessary at this late day. There had been times in the history of the colony when he was active in quelling mutinies that an attempt upon his life would not have surprised him, but since his removal from command and especially since the arrival of Ribault, his own murder seemed to him to be quite unnecessary.

"Call the officers of the watch," he said to the sentinel. "We must get this man to Charnay."

In answer to the call Prevatt appeared with three soldiers. One of them was La Roche, the runt. The other two were unknown to Roget being among the new arrivals.

Prevatt was plainly astounded at the sight of Roget, evidently unhurt and Vasseur, probably dead. He had expected a different report.

"I want this man taken to Charnay, he has been hurt, Roget said addressing Prevatt.

But Prevatt only glared at him, so he repeated. "This man is badly wounded. We must get him to the doctor."

Prevatt turned to his men, "Take this man to Charnay," he ordered pointing to Vasseur, and as La Roche stepped forward, he added, "La Roche, you remain with me. Let the others take him." He described to them the location of Charnay's room.

As the men moved away with the limp body of Vasseur dangling between them, Roget started to follow, but Prevatt stepped in his path.

"You are under arrest," he said with a malicious grin.

Roget supposed that the charge was the assault on Vasseur. Again he saw the mistake he had made by not immediately getting the letter to Laudonniere, in which case he would have been restored to rank and Prevatt could not have arrested a superior on such grounds without a direct order from the commanding officer.

"I wish to be taken to Captain Laudonniere," he said hoping yet that he might save the situation.

"Captain Laudonniere is no longer in command of the fort," was Prevatt's curt reply.

"Then I would speak to Captain Verdier, who I understand is in command during the absence of Admiral Ribault."

"You can speak to no one."

Roget saw that he was at the mercy of Prevatt, and knew that he could expect none from him. If he could only get word to Darboux, but to ask Prevatt was useless. In the dim light of the torch he could see the sinister expression of his captors as they watched his every move. They were entirely alone.

On account of the lateness of the hour the parade was deserted, the sentinel had moved away on his beat, and even if he could have spoken to him, Roget knew that he was under the orders of Prevatt, the Captain of the night watch, and that his appeal would fall on deaf ears. He would try arguing with Prevatt, it could do no harm and would be a play for time at least.

"I did not strike Vasseur—" he began, and then realizing, that a statement of the facts would involve Olata, he hesitated.

But Prevatt did not seem to be impressed. In fact the wounding of Vasseur was of small import to him. Since Roget was not killed, he would have preferred that Vasseur had been completely destroyed, for he knew too much.

"The matter of Vasseur will be judged by the commanding officer. You are under arrest for treason," he said sternly.

"Treason!" Roget gasped. So Charnay was unable to protect him. He had been on parole under his care and had thoughtlessly gone away with Darboux. This was the consequence. Yet there was one more chance. "But Laudonniere is no longer in command. I will appeal to Admiral Ribault," he said quickly.

Prevatt chuckled, "appeal and be damned to you, the order is from Admiral Ribault himself."

"I don't believe it. This is conspiracy," Roget answered angrily.

"Think so?" snarled Prevatt. "Then read this and see." He was enjoying the discomfiture of his former superior.

Roget took the paper and moved to the light to read the order. There was no mistaking it; signed and sealed it was by order of his Majesty the King on the charge of treason against him and his officers.

Roget handed the paper back to Prevatt. "Well, what are you going to do?" he asked calmly.

"To the dungeon," was Prevatt's terse reply.

They moved across the dark parade. Roget saw a light in

his own room and knew that Charnay was there, probably administering to the villain Vasseur. If he could only speak a word to his friend, and have him advise Darboux of his predicament, word would soon come from Ribault for his release. But the suggestion to Prevatt to allow him to speak to Charnay met with a gruff refusal. No other word was spoken until they reached the dungeon. On one side of Roget Prevatt marched with the torch in his left hand, his right upon the handle of his rapier; while on the other side was La Roche with his pike held in readiness.

During the walk the brains of the three were very active and not altogether at variance in thought since each was confronted with the problem of their extrication from perplexing entanglements.

Prevatt and La Roche understood each other to a degree. The sudden arrival of Ribault had completely demolished the plans of the conspirators. Prevatt had told Vasseur and La Roche enough concerning the conversation he had overheard between Roget and Darboux to persuade them that it was necessary to recover the letter, for by so doing they could destroy all evidence against themselves. It had fallen to Vasseur's lot to waylay Roget, and knowing that he had gone with Darboux on board ship, Vasseur had waited all evening near the wharf for his return. The order for Roget's arrest had come as a surprise to Prevatt after Vasseur had departed on his mission, and had been handed to him by Verdier when that officer had appointed him Captain of the night watch. So he had summoned La Roche to serve on the watch with him and together they had awaited Roget's return, seeing a chance to recover the letter if Vasseur should fail.

But the way was not so clear now, even if he did obtain the letter for he knew that Roget had advised Darboux that it was in his handwriting. He presumed that the order for Roget's arrest had resulted from evidence submitted to Ribault by

Laudonniere, but the effect the testimony of Darboux and Roget would have he could not foresee. Anyway the possession of the letter and its prompt destruction was the main object, and then it would be merely his word against Roget's.

The sight of Vasseur's apparent lifeless form had rather unnerved La Roche. He did not relish any part of the affair. He had first been pulled into it by Vasseur's picture of his share of the riches which would accrue to him by joining the mutineers, and he had known nothing of the letter which Prevatt had written to Admiral Coligny until the meeting in the woods that day. He wished he was well out of it, but Prevatt's and Vasseur's threats had forced him to follow them, with the assurance that the destruction of the letter would end his troubles.

Roget on his part was thinking of some plan to get a message to Darboux. He wondered what Charnay would think of his long absence and if he would make an effort to locate him. He saw little chance to avoid a night in prison but he hoped that in the morning a search by Darboux would reveal the fact of his incarceration and that his liberation would quickly follow.

The dungeon was an excavation near the east angle of the fort where, in construction of the fortification, dirt had been removed to make an embankment. It was boarded on all sides with heavy staves driven in the ground, which prevented the loose soil from caving and also served as a support for the ceiling of logs and plank upon which rested the foundation of the store house. A small opening near the ceiling admitted the meagre amount of light and air which could seep through a hole dug down to it alongside the foundation of the structure above. There was no other means of ventilation or lighting when the door was closed. Entrance was had by rough steps of short logs laid in the conglomeration of sand and loose coquina shale through which a narrow trench had been dug

with a steep decline to the door. This door, made of strong plank reinforced with iron strips, swung outward and was held closed by a heavy bar clamped across it on the outside.

Single file, La Roche going first to open the door, Roget following and Prevatt bringing up the rear, they descended the steps and entered the place, foul with musty air. Prevatt stuck the stake of the torch in the soft dirt and ordered La Roche to close the door.

Turning to Roget he said in the most matter-of-fact way, "Now, Roget, I want that letter."

The request took Roget completely by surprise. "What letter?" he asked mechanically, for it never occurred to him that Prevatt could have known of the conversation with Darboux.

Prevatt sneered, "You know the letter I mean, the one Darboux gave to you this afternoon. Hand it over."

Perhaps Prevatt knew nothing and was trying to trap him. Roget decided he would be equally cunning in his reply, so assuming an air of indifference, he said, "When you explain what you mean then I can better answer you."

Prevatt was not sure that Roget still had the letter, for he might have returned it to Darboux, but he intended to know and there was no need for further parley. He advanced menacingly. "Darboux gave you a letter in your room this afternoon." He said harshly. "Will you give it to me or will you force us to take it from you?"

Roget backed against the wall. He knew now that Prevatt was not acting under orders demanding the letter, or he would have done so before they reached the dungeon. It was a private affair and he was within his rights in defending property which was entrusted to him. Besides the possession of the letter might prove a means of clearing his own name. He saw a heavy club lying a few feet away and he edged toward it, feeling that if he could secure it the contest would not be so unequal. Prevatt saw the movement and ordered La Roche

to search him.

La Roche approached and Roget floored him with a right hand blow, the pike flying in a corner, whereupon Prevatt drew his rapier but Roget was upon him and landed a blow full in the face which sent him reeling to the ground, the rapier falling from his grasp. Roget saw the sword fall and started for it, but La Roche who had risen dived for his legs and before Roget could step out of reach he was held in a vice-like grip. The impact threw him to the ground and over and over he and La Roche rolled in the dirt, as Prevatt, stunned by the blow, sat where he had fallen blinking at them through the cloud of dust. Not until they had almost rolled on him did Prevatt seem to awaken to the realization of what was going on, and in an endeavor to scramble out of the way his hand came in contact with the club which lay on the ground by his side. He grasped it and staggered to his feet. Roget finally caught La Roche by the throat and rolled on top of him, in a second more the combat would have been over as far as La Roche was concerned, but Prevatt swung the club which landed on the back of Roget's head. With a groan he lay limp in the dust.

Prevatt groped through the stifling fog to where Roget lay, searched his pocket, and found the letter. He examined it by the dim light and assured himself that it was what he wanted. "Let's get out of this," he called to La Roche, who sat panting on the ground. La Roche scrambled to his feet, feeling his neck as if to see if it were still there.

"A nice mess you've made of it," he growled. "My neck's broke."

"Your head will be broken if you don't come on. Let's get away from here before someone comes. We will leave the door open so we won't be suspected. They'll think it was some friend of Vasseur's."

"Did you get the letter?" La Roche asked as he wearily

picked up his pike.

"Yes, and I am going to destroy it before more harm is done."

Prevatt recovered his sword and in passing Roget's prostrate form he poked it with his foot but there was not even an answering groan.

He went out, followed by La Roche.

CHAPTER VI

THE ESCAPE

Charnay was greatly distressed on account of the continued absence of Roget. He knew that the order for arrest had been issued and the reason therefore, as he had been with Admiral Ribault during the entire time the Admiral was ashore, but he seemed powerless to aid his friend in any way. His latest information was to the effect that Roget had not yet been arrested, nor had he been seen since the late afternoon.

When Ribault had entered the fort, and Charnay had advised that Laudonniere should be taken to his room, the Admiral had insisted that he accompany them. Charnay had expected that Laudonniere, following the fatigue and excitement of the day would suffer a complete breakdown, but to his surprise the patient held up well, evidently through sheer will power.

When Laudonniere had asked the reason for the hostile demonstration, and Prevatt was ordered from the room, Charnay, as attending physician, was allowed to remain. Ribault readily gave his reason, with a full account of the letter to Coligny, and the suspicions held against Laudonniere. Charnay was astounded to hear Laudonniere admit he was fully advised of the letter and that Louis Roget was its author. Even Ribault expressed his surprise at the statement having known Roget many years as a faithful soldier and a loyal friend. But Laudonniere dwelt upon Roget's Spanish blood and insisted that he had positive evidence of his guilt, declining, however, to give the source of his information, and claimed that he had already

shown too much leniency in not having Roget arrested. Ribault, although apparently only half persuaded, had issued the order but grimly following it with another one displacing Laudonniere and appointing Captain Charles Verdier temporary commander of the fort.

After the Thanksgiving services in the Chapel, where Charnay had vainly scanned the faces before him hoping to see Roget, Ribault had returned to his ship. Later Verdier had told Charnay that Roget could not be found and it was his belief that he had escaped, but he had left the order with the Captain of the night watch, Prevatt, to arrest him should he return to the fort.

All these things bore heavily on Charnay's mind as he sat in his room and tried to read his Bible, the one book that had always offered him consolation in the hour of trial. But reading seemed impossible tonight. Roget's difficulties, his mysterious disappearance, the chances of foul play, kept running through his mind. He was sure that Roget had not attempted to escape, but where could he be? He remembered his dejected air when he had left the dock, ordered off by Prevatt. Could he have gone away with Olata, the Indian?

At every sound he started, hoping that it was Roget returning, or someone bringing news of him. Finally he arose, laid his Book aside, and strolled out to the edge of the gallery. A light westerly breeze stirred the branches of a palmetto nearby, the only tree left standing in the fort. The lazy rustling of its leaves was the only sound he could hear. He noticed a light in Laudonniere's room, an unusual thing at this hour of the night, and decided he would see how his patient was progressing, for an hour before he had left him sleeping quietly and had seen the light extinguished by Piere.

There was no answer to his gentle tap, nor to his louder knock, so he opened the door. The lighted lamp was on the table, Piere was asleep on a pallet in the corner, Laudonniere,

wild-eyed, sat on the edge of the bed gazing into space. He slowly turned his head and saw Charnay.

"Oh, Charnay, I'm glad you came," he said, his voice scarcely above a whisper.

"What has happened?" asked Charnay with concern.

"I have had a horrible dream. I saw Louis Roget lying there dead," Laudonniere pointed to the floor. "His spirit arose from his body and came to me. His features were life-like, and there was a look of sorrow on his face as he said, 'Oh, Rene, you have murdered me.'"

Charnay sat beside the agitated man and placed his arm around him. "It was only a dream," he said soothingly. "Lie down and go to sleep. You need rest." He gave him a sleeping potion. But Laudonniere moaned "I must have light, I can't sleep. When I close my eyes he comes before me again, and those same words ring in my ears, 'You've murdered me! you've murdered me!'"

From the outside just then came the sound of voices and heavy shuffling of feet. Both doctor and patient listened. Now just by the door the sound grew louder of footsteps scrapping along the floor not with measured tread but a jerky shuffle as if someone staggered.

Laudonniere caught Charnay as a frightened child would cling. "It's he. They're bringing him here. Don't let them bring him here," he begged.

But the footsteps passed down the gallery toward his own room.

Now a great fear in turn seized Charnay. Suppose it was really Roget. It might be for that shuffling sound had ceased as if those who carried the body had stopped before his own door.

He wanted to rush to learn if it was true, but the thoroughly frightened man clung to him more closely.

Charnay firmly but tenderly released himself and called the

boy.

"Piere! Piere!" he shouted. "Wake up."

Piere jumped from the pallet, "what is it?"

"Here, watch your master. I must go to my room. Call me if you need me."

Laudonniere lay back as if exhausted. Charnay gave him one final look as if doubtful what to do, then without further hesitation hurried from the room.

On the outside his first sensation was one of faintness as he looked down the gallery and believed that his worst fears were true. He could discern the forms of three men, one holding a light, standing around a form huddled on the floor. As he approached he recognized the one with the light as Verdier the new commander, who was occupying the room next to his for the night.

He had been awakened by the others who, having found Charnay's room vacant, had tried his door.

"Is he dead?" was Charnay's question as he came up to them.

"Don't know," answered one of the men.

"Bring him in here," Charnay led the way into his room and on to Roget's couch, which he tenderly smoothed in preparation to receive his friend.

It was not until the men laid the body upon the couch that he recognized the bearded face of Vasseur. "Thank God," he breathed fervently.

As he made a hurried examination, Verdier questioned the men, who belonged to his command. They were serving on the night watch they told him and the wounded man was brought into the fort. The Captain of the watch had ordered them to bring him to the doctor's room. That was all they knew.

Vasseur was still alive but Charnay saw that there was little

chance for his recovery. Cutting away the blood soaked waistcoat, he found a gaping wound between the shoulders from which the blood was still oozing. While he was staunching the wound, the injured man groaned.

"Do you know him?" Verdier asked.

"Yes," replied Charnay, "his name is Vasseur."

At the moment Vasseur again groaned and opened his eyes. "Drink," he gasped.

Charnay mixed some brandy with water and he drank, his eyes wandering about the room until they fell upon Charnay's face. There was a gleam of recognition. "I am going, preacher, it's all over," he said faintly.

Charnay tried to sooth him with encouraging words, but he rambled on. "I haven't followed your teachings, preacher. I have been bad, but you say there is forgiveness, if I repent. I'm sorry I tried to kill him, preacher."

Charnay was busy dressing the wound. Verdier also heard the words of the wounded man. "Ask him who stabbed him," he said to Charnay, but Vasseur heard the question.

"Something fell on me from—from—I don't know where," he stammered, "but I'm sorry. Tell Captain Roget that I'm sorry I tried to kill him."

At the sound of Roget's name, Charney bent close to the man's ear. "You say you tried to kill Roget?"

"Yes, but Prevatt made me."

Charnay turned excitedly to Verdier, but he had heard also.

"Let him go on," he said to Charnay, and to Vasseur, "Tell us more."

"I-tried-to-kill-him," he whispered hoarsely, "but something fell on me—"

"Why did you want to kill Roget?" Charnay interrupted.

Both men bent over the dying man to catch every word.

"He-had-the-letter-Prevatt-wrote-to-Admiral-Coligny. Darboux-gave-it-to-him—"

A convulsive coughing interrupted. Charnay gave him brandy. Finally he began again, but very faintly, "Pray for me, preacher—"

"Yes, yes, I will," Charnay said encouragingly, "but where is Roget?"

"It was near the Chapel—I—I—" there was a gurgling sound—a fit of coughing and they could get him to say no more. Vasseur had paid the price.

Charnay told Verdier of the room used as a morgue, and the latter ordered his men to take the body there and to return and put Charnay's room in order.

Then the two men turned to the task of solving the mystery. Charnay explained to Verdier the happenings of the day, of Laudonniere's sudden determination to demote Roget, and the latter's suspicion that Prevatt had been the cause.

If Vasseur's statement was true, and neither doubted it, Prevatt was the guilty party, and not Roget. Here might be found a motive for Prevatt's acting, if indeed he had aught to do with Laudonniere's decision. Anyway, both decided it was not well to advise the Captain of the watch of their plans until further investigation, and that the important matter now was to find Roget.

Verdier put great store in Vasseur's statement concerning Darboux, whom he greatly respected and admired. In fact his affection for Adele Darboux, though thus far unrequited, was sufficient for him to secretly entertain the ambition to some day call Alphonse his brother. He thought that Chevalier Darboux should be immediately apprised of the affair for he happened to know that Ribault had entrusted Darboux with the letter, and Roget must have stood very high in his graces to have in turn been entrusted with a document of such importance. Furthermore, if the letter by any chance should be lost he knew that Darboux would prefer that any information regarding the affair should be transmitted to Ribault by himself.

So he decided to dispatch a messenger to the caravel at once, and while waiting for his return they would institute a search for Roget.

Charnay dropped in at Laudonniere's room to learn the condition of his patient. He found that the potion had successfully accomplished its purpose and that Laudonniere was peacefully sleeping. He ordered Piere to extinguish the light and go to sleep. Then Verdier dispatched one of the men, who by this time had returned, with a message to Darboux.

As they crossed the parade starting on their search for Roget they met Prevatt and La Roche. Charnay and Verdier would have passed on, but Prevatt appeared desirous to enter into conversation with them.

"Are there any special orders for the night watch, sir," he asked Verdier.

"No," Verdier promptly replied and moved on again.

"Have you any orders regarding the funeral of Vasseur?" Prevatt asked following him.

"Then you knew of Vasseur's death?"

"Yes, I saw the men bearing the body away. I have left a guard over it."

"Very good, Captain Prevatt," Verdier said coming close to him so that the light from La Roche's torch would fall on Prevatt's rather than his own face.

"Do you know any particulars as to the cause of Vasseur's death?"

"He was found wounded just outside the fort."

"Do you know who—er; stabbed him?"

"No sir."

"Have you any reason to suspect anyone?"

Prevatt hesitated for an instant. "I have reason to suspect that it was Louis Roget."

Verdier and Charnay exchanged glances.

"Why do you suspect Roget?" Verdier asked.

"I believe Vasseur tried to kill Roget, and Roget killed Vasseur in self-defense."

"Why should Vasseur try to kill Roget?"

"There was a bitter feeling against Roget on the part of Vasseur and several friends for his activity in putting down a mutiny a month ago, in which Vasseur was the leader."

Verdier turned to Charnay. "Is this true? Was there a mutiny a month ago in which Vasseur was leader?"

Charnay nodded his head in assent.

Prevatt saw that he was making excellent headway and he lost no time in strengthening his position. "I have even heard the report that Roget contemplated a mutiny of his own making, and that Vasseur was in his way."

"That's a lie." Charnay prompted retorted.

But the words in no way disconcerted Prevatt. "Oh, probably so," he rejoined calmly. "I was only saying what I heard. I suppose that it was merely a rumor."

"Have you seen anything of Roget?" was Verdier's next question.

"Oh, yes," Prevatt promptly replied. "I arrested him to-night and put him in the dungeon."

"In the dungeon?" both Verdier and Charnay chimed in unison.

"Certainly. Where else could I put him? You gave me the order to arrest him."

"That's right," Verdier agreed. "Where is the dungeon?"

"I'll show you," Charnay volunteered quickly and led the way. Prevatt motioned La Roche who seemed to prefer to hang back, to go ahead with the torch.

As they neared the entrance, Prevatt took the torch from La Roche and preceded the others down the narrow steps in order to open the door, which he was careful to explain to Verdier was only barred on the outside.

When half way down the steps, he stopped, holding the torch

over his head and called out excitedly, "The door is open. He has escaped." Then turning to the others who were immediately behind he continued in a confidential tone, "some of his friends have probably liberated him. I will begin a search for him immediately."

He acted as if he would turn back and retrace his steps, and Verdier also turned as if to do the same, but Charnay, who was next in line said, "Let's look inside while we are here."

"Yes, we had just as well," Verdier agreed.

Prevatt as readily acquiesced, "surely, why not," he said as he continued down the steps.

La Roche was at the rear and timidly stood in the doorway, as the others entered. Charnay's first intimation of foul play was Prevatt's words voiced in a tone of horror. "My God, they have killed him."

Then Charnay as he came within the circle of light beheld a form stretched upon the dirt floor with the side of the face only partially revealed. In a second he was upon his knees beside the body. With the aid of Prevatt who seemed quite desirous of helping in every way, he turned the body over and brushing the dust from the features recognized Roget. He could find no blood and the pulse was good, but a large knot on the back of the head where there was a small abrasion, together with the heavy club lying by his side, told the story.

Prevatt made a pretense of carefully examining the ground and called Verdier's attention to evidences of a desperate struggle.

"He put up a good fight," Prevatt said, "but I suppose there were too many for him."

"And who do you suppose was guilty of the crime?" Verdier asked with just a touch of sarcasm.

"Vasseur's friends, of course," Prevatt readily responded. "There could be no one else who would have a reason to do such a thing. It's easily explained. After we put him here and

barred the door from the outside, some friends of Vasseur's, knowing that he was here and wishing to avenge Roget's attack on Vasseur, came and unbarred the door. The fight followed, and here is the result." With a gesture and a shrug, Prevatt thus dismissed the case with his splendid logic. But he covertly watcher Charnay searching Roget's pockets.

Charnay was not to be so easily satisfied. He arose and faced Prevatt. "Who was with you when you brought Roget here?" he asked sternly.

"La Roche there, he will vouch for the fact that we left him here, standing about where you are now. Didn't we, La Roche?"

La Roche shuffled his feet, coughed but finally came out with a strong, "Yes, sir."

Charnay glared at Prevatt for a moment, who met the look without winking an eye.

"This is not the end of the matter. Unless his skull is fractured he will get well. He may regain consciousness anyway. Then we will find what he has to say." And Charnay turned his attention again to Roget. "We must get him out of here. Come and help me." After some difficulty they succeeded in getting the heavy body up the narrow steps. When they reached his room Charnay found that while the blow was severe, the skull was not fractured. Yet all efforts to restore the injured man to consciousness were fruitless.

Very soon Darboux arrived. He had not depended upon a messenger when he had learned of the happening in the fort during the night, and that Roget was missing. His arrival appeared quite disconcerting to Prevatt, who, in a moment suggested that his duties demanded that he make his rounds.

Darboux was busy examining Roget, while he conversed with Charnay in a low tone.

Charnay was telling him of Vasseur's confession, as Prevatt started toward the door, followed by La Roche. Darboux

turned from the couch.

"Wait a moment, Prevatt, I wish to ask you a few questions," he said sharply.

Prevatt hesitated as if undecided whether to obey, then stood where he was, and waited, with La Roche by his side.

Darboux advanced toward him. "Roget had a letter today which I gave him. It is gone. Do you know of its whereabouts?"

"No, sir," Prevatt answered promptly.

"That letter was written by you to Admiral Coligny."

Prevatt wavered slightly, moistened his lips, and stammered. "I know nothing about it, sir."

"You admit you wrote a letter to Admiral Coligny?"

"N-no, sir, I know nothing about it."

Darboux did not appear to notice the denial.

"Prevatt, in some way you learned that Roget had that letter and you attacked him in order to get it. Now, didn't you?"

"No, sir, I know nothing about the letter."

Darboux's pointed finger was almost in Prevatt's face. "You sent Vasseur to kill Roget," he roared.

Prevatt squared himself and looked steadfastly in Darboux's eye. "No, sir, I did not," he answered firmly.

Darboux lowered his voice almost to a whisper. "Vasseur said you did."

"Vasseur lied," Prevatt replied without a quiver.

Darboux appeared for a moment to be checkmated. He turned suddenly to La Roche. "You were with Captain Prevatt when he arrested Captain Roget?"

"Yes, sir," La Roche answered trembling.

"Did you see him take a letter from Roget's pocket?"

"N-no, sir," he stammered looking at Prevatt whose eye was glued on him.

"You and Prevatt overpowered Roget and took that letter from him."

"No, sir, we didn't. When we left him in the dungeon he was all right."

His whimpering manner, in reality, temporarily saved Prevatt.

"That's enough tonight," Darboux concluded. "But in the morning we will go into the matter more thoroughly. I will report the whole affair to Admiral Ribault. You may go now."

Without a word Prevatt left the room followed by La Roche. The three remaining discussed the situation from every angle. All were positive in their opinions that Prevatt and La Roche were guilty, but they must wait for Roget's testimony. Charnay could not tell from his present condition when that would be available.

A half hour later they separated, Darboux to return to his ship, promising to be on hand again early in the morning; Verdier to his room to seek a little rest, agreeing upon a time that he should be called by Charnay to relieve him in his care of Roget.

When Darboux reached the main portal of the fort the sentinel was standing at the gate, gazing into the darkness. He recognized Darboux as the officer whom Verdier, the commander, had recently summoned from the ship. He saluted and said, "that is very strange."

"What is very strange?" Darboux inquired curiously.

"That Captain Prevatt and La Roche should go into the forest so late at night."

"When did they go?"

"Just before you came. They seemed to be in a great hurry. One carried an arquebus and each had a bundle as if they were going on an expedition. But why did they not wait until morning? That is what I asked myself."

"Escaped," muttered Darboux as he went back into the fort.

He returned to Charnay's room and reported what he had heard. They called Verdier and made an investigation. Pre-

vatt's room showed all the signs of a hurried departure. The same was true in the men's quarters where La Roche slept. Others in the room reported that they had been awakened by his activities only a few moments before, and that when asked the reason for the commotion had received a surly answer to go to perdition.

"Where can they go?" Darboux asked.

"Only to the savages, or become savages themselves and live on roots and berries and what game they can kill," Charnay replied.

"They will return," Darboux said, and in after years he remembered how true was his prophesy, but little did he think at the time of the miseries that the return of at least one of them would bring to the French Colony on the River of May.

CHAPTER VII

ADELE

In the transient period between sleeping and awakening, however sudden the awakening may be, the line of demarcation between unconsciousness and consciousness is difficult to define. With Louis Roget, the transient period was a succession of light and darkness, of forces antagonistic; one pulling him into the light, where racking throbbing pain held sway; another drawing him back into darkness, where forgetfulness reigned. Each successive period of light seemed longer and the distress seemed greater than the one before. Figures appeared before his eyes, one of them of ethereal form that seemed to beckon him to remain and not to again seek the shadow of forgetfulness.

The first tangible thought that Roget could weave out of the chaos of dreams was the hazy idea that the spirit of Olata's mother welcomed him into another life. Then the form changed and he saw his own mother as she was when he was a child and he wished that she might remain with him always. Again the form changed and a young woman with features of transcendent loveliness bent over him and her lips touched his, oh, so gently, and the sweetness of nectar was there. Upon his forehead was the touch of a hand, a soft caressing touch that made the pain go back somewhere—and made the throbbing, crashing sounds in his head grow fainter. Then the vision died away, the form floated far into the distance and forgetfulness again held sway as he peacefully slept.

When he awakened the room was in semi-darkness as in

the dusk of the evening. Sounds of activity came to his ears, the low hum of voices in the distance or an occasional shout, tramping feet passing and repassing, the noise of hammering, all of which filled him with curiosity for his faculties were fully alert. A dull pain in the back of his head made his head seek the cause and he felt a bandage there. The objects in the line of his vision as he lay were familiar to him. He was in his own room, he knew, but what had happened? Then thought linked the past and present, and he remembered the fight in the dungeon, the grovelling in the dirt with La Roche, the thought that victory was at hand and then—the blackness of night. And the letter, that was the cause of it all, where was the letter that Alphonse had left with him in trust? He looked about for his clothes, in the dim light he could not see them. But he must find that letter. He started to rise when a hand was gently laid upon his arm and a voice spoke in his ear, a voice soft and musical.

"You must rest now, Louis." Adele Darboux, who was sitting close beside the couch, leaned over and looked into his face.

He gazed into the lustrous eyes above him, marked the perfectly formed mouth and nose, the cheeks that carried a faint blush which was lost in the whiteness of the throat.

"Oh, Adele, you here?" he murmured.

"Yes, I have been here since early morning," she said. "Alphonse brought me ashore at daylight. You were badly hurt, Monsieur Charnay and the others had much to do. I could best be spared to nurse you." She opened the shutters and the rays of the late afternoon sun fell across his couch.

"I am glad you came," he said with a smile, and then remembering the letter, he started again to rise. "I must find a letter that Alphonse gave me." But she again held out the restraining hand. "Do not be concerned about the letter, Louis. Alphonse told me to tell you that all was well, Admiral

Ribault, Captain Laudonniere and the rest know that Prevatt wrote it. You have been restored to your rank, and now your only task is to get well.

"I am well," he said as he stretched his arms full length and waved them over his head to show his strength.

"Then I suppose you have no further need for a nurse and I should go," she answered half coquettishly.

"No, no," he quickly exclaimed. "I did not mean that." And he settled himself back with a happy chuckle, "I guess I am a very sick man."

"Then be a good boy and behave," she said, patting him gently on the hand as she arose.

He watched her as she crossed the room and he thought how this same room, in which he had spent so many dismal hours in the months of waiting for help to arrive, had suddenly become a paradise.

She returned with a tray of food which she placed on the table near his couch. "Ernest brought this from the ship. We thought you might be hungry when you awakened."

"I am starved," he said, looking at her.

"A young Indian brought a brace of quail," she continued. "He came early in the morning and when he learned that you were so desperately ill he hung about the door until Charnay returned and allowed him to come in."

"Olata," Roget said simply.

"Yes, that was his name. "He looked at you a long time as you lay there so helpless. Then he turned to Charnay and uttered the words 'no die,' and went away. In an hour he returned with the brace of quail and he cooked them in the yard over live coals and told Charnay by signs that before the sun had set that you would awaken and be hungry."

"Where is he now?"

"He went away, but he told Charnay he would return early in the morning."

"Good Olata," Roget breathed softly.

She took a pillow from Charnay's couch and with his own she propped him against the headpiece. Then she sat beside him and fed him as though he were a child. He fell into the mood and they chatted and laughed as he stretched his neck to receive the morsels, or to drink the wine which she held for him. And though the effort to reach pained him, he did not mind. The joy in his heart compensated.

Finally when he had finished she brought a bowl that he might dip his fingers, and then she sat beside him again.

"Tell me when it all happened. When was I in the dungeon? Was it last night or the night before?" His questions came thick and fast.

"It was last night. They found you there where Prevatt and La Roche had left you. Charles Verdier and the others brought you here and Charnay feared for a time that you would not recover. Then you rallied and for hours you were in delirium, but you finally sank into a peaceful sleep and now—" she hesitated as a gulp came into her throat, "you are all right, aren't you, Louis?"

Roget thought he saw a lurking tear. "Yes," he said softly as his eyes feasted upon her face. "Yes, thank God, I am now all right."

She breathed a deep sigh of satisfaction, "Yes, thanks be to God."

"Vasseur died," she continued after a moment.

"Poor Vasseur," Roget sighed. "He would have killed me, but Olata prevented him."

"Then God bless Olata," Adele said fervently, after a moment's silence.

"What did they do with Prevatt and La Roche;" he asked.

"They escaped," she replied.

"Escaped?"

"Yes, in the night. But Alphonse says that they must either

return or starve."

"Not if they have means of killing game," Roget said thoughtfully. "And wild fruit and berries are plentiful. Besides the Indians are friendly if treated right. No, I could live alone here a long time if I was forced to, but it would be a hard life away from the society of my fellowman," he hesitated and then added slowly, "and away from you, Adele. I don't think I would want to live at all."

She changed the subject abruptly. "You were fighting Indians in your delirium, Louis."

This brought to his mind another thought. "Were you here all the day?" he asked eagerly.

"Yes, all day."

"I had a wonderful dream," he said speaking slowly. "I dreamed a beautiful angel kissed me, and as her lips touched mine it seemed that the gates of Heaven opened." He sighed contentedly, "I would be willing to endure the agonies again to experience such happiness."

Adele's face crimsoned and she hurriedly arose busying herself in removing the tray from the table in order to hide her confusion.

Roget's eyes followed her as she moved about the room, and his mind went back to those days in La Rochelle when he had known her as a child, a gay romping child with never a care which she would not come to him to confide. He was a frequent visitor at the Darboux home in those days, for his father was a friend of Jean Darboux, her father, and he and Alphonse were friends and companions in arms. Adele had regarded him as an older brother just as she regarded Alphonse, and in her arguments with Ernest, her younger brother, it was Louis Roget to whom she always went, sure of a champion. Then for three years he had not seen her, for he and Alphonse had gone away to war, to that fratricidal carnage that had left France bleeding and torn, and yet had

decided nothing. And when he had returned, in place of Adele the child, he had found a maiden of wondrous beauty who seemed not to know of the transformation and the tall young soldier with the sabre cut across his cheek found himself admitted without question to his old place in her affections. And again years later he was called to arms, this time to serve under Coligny in the Huguenot army, and for another year he did not see her, and then only for a moment. One day as the army was passing through La Rochelle he had made a hurried visit to her home to find that she and her mother, with Ernest, were just starting south to escape a possible invasion of the army of the Duke of Guise.

When he again returned after the war he found that Fate had dealt very harshly with the Darboux family. The home was deserted, Jean, the father had been killed, and the others were fugitives except Alphonse, who was preparing to sail with Ribault on the first expedition to New France. Roget had joined that same expedition. Upon their return from Port Royal, Alphonse had accepted an offer from Coligny to serve at home for it gave him an opportunity to search for his family. Roget was assigned as aide to Captain Rene Laudonniere in the second expedition to New France. Before departing from La Rochelle, he had made inquiries concerning Adele, but he could obtain no definite information. They could only tell him what he already knew, that in the general exodus of a few years before she had gone away with others of her family and that nothing had been heard since then. In those days of civil and religious wars when families were often divided, when members were often engaged in mortal combat one against the other, and self preservation was the first and often the only consideration, the matter of family separations was of minor consequence and passed with but little notice.

During the past fourteen months Louis Roget had often

wondered if he would ever see Adele again. He had thought not. She had been placed in a sacred niche in the chamber of his hallowed memories with others whom he had loved and who had gone from him. And then, yesterday, as if the Heavens had opened and released an angel, she had come to him. Today a Divine Providence had placed her by his side to brighten his waking moments.

He wondered if, in these long years of separation, Adele had ever thought of him. Probably not, and if at all, only with passing consideration. Nor could she ever imagine that his regard for her was more than that of a brother. Could it be possible that the kiss was not a dream, that it might have been hers, that in compassion for him in his misfortune she had let her lips touch his as a token of that sisterly affection which had endured from former days. No, it was too wonderful to be true, too much to be hoped for, too much kindness for Fate to bestow upon him. No, it could be only a dream.

Adele watched him narrowly as his eyes followed her only to shift to some other object in the room when he caught her looking his way. She returned to the seat beside the bed and he gazed into her eyes trying to find an answer to his many questions, but the sparkling twinkle told him nothing.

"I also dreamed that I saw my mother," he said hoping that he might allay any suspicion which his previous question might have raised in her mind as to its real meaning, or if there was any chance of its being true that he might, by prolonging the story of the dream, obtain some intimation from her of that which he desired so much to learn.

"Oh—your mother," she said softly, "I have always wished that I could have known your mother. My own dear mother spoke so many times and so beautifully of her. You knew that we lost our mother, Louis. I believe Alphonse told you."

"Yes, Alphonse told me." Roget replied.

Then Adele recited to him the story of the five years of separation. Caught in the maelstrom of religious strife they had been unable to reach the haven which they sought and were the victims of ruthless persecution. The death of her mother was only the beginning of her miseries.

Separated from Ernest, she was not even allowed the companionship of one of her own religion. She was promised her freedom if she would renounce that religion she held so dear, but she would not recant. It was only by good fortune that Alphonse had found her, and the power of Coligny at Court had secured her liberation.

Roget listened with rapt attention to the recital as his blood boiled. The dull aching in his head changed to a succession of sharp pains and bright spots flickered before his eyes. But he did not notice these warning symptoms. Raising himself on his elbow he said passionately, "Adele, is it not cruel that the religion we love, which teaches us to love one another should be the cause of suffering to those we love so dearly? Why should you, who never harmed any one, be the victim of cruel religious persecutions? Why should your mother and my mother, whose lives were spent in lovely deeds, meet their death through a religion, the fundamental teaching of which, is love. You did not know my mother, Adele, but I knew yours. They were much alike, those two women, their lives were spent in doing much alike, those two women, their lives were spent in doing good to others, always sacrifice, always love, love of family, love of God, love of Church—and yet their very love was the cause of their deaths."

"It was not the result of religion, Louis. I cannot bring myself to think that," she said tearfully.

He thought for a second. "You are right, Adele, it is not the fault of the religion, it is the followers of the religion. When I think of my mother, after weeks of suffering upon the rack, a victim of the terrible auto-da-fe, led through the

streets of Avilles arrayed in the horrible sanbenito and, finally—" The memory of that scene of his childhood caused him to cover his eyes with his hands and to sob aloud.

"Please don't, Louis," Adele pleaded, "you will make yourself ill again, lie back and rest."

But he did not heed her words. As he dropped his hand she saw that his eyes were filled with tears and he gnashed his teeth in his rage. "When I think of my poor mother there at the stake, I swear vengeance against everything Spanish. I even hate my own Spanish blood which she gave me. It has been my curse and always will be—"

"No, no," she interrupted, "don't say that."

He trembled in every limb. The pains in his head came more quickly and more sharply, and the throbbing of the blood in his temples sounded in his ears like the clanking of a machine. He fell back upon his pillow.

Adele was thoroughly frightened. She hurriedly applied a wet cloth to his forehead speaking encouraging words to him and upbraiding herself for allowing him to talk. For a time he lay unconscious, but finally the cool water had the desired effect and his eyes opened again. To his delight she gently stroked his head and it was with regret that he heard Charnay enter, for she desisted to give place to the physician.

When Charnay heard the whole story from Adele, in which she in no way excused herself for her carelessness and to which Roget objected laying the blame upon himself, the doctor prescribed absolute quiet and no company for at least three days. To Roget, this meant the absence of Adele from the room during the time, and he begged very hard that she should be allowed to come, at least occasionally.

Now, Charnay was very busy and Adele's offer to remain with Roget during the day had been quite a relief to him. While he knew that Roget would not need constant attention, it was well that someone should be with him until all danger

had passed, but it should be someone who would see that he did not talk or become excited. Upon the promise of both that his instructions would be strictly carried out, Charnay consented to allow her to remain with Roget as long as her other duties would permit. She came each day and did not fail to carry out the doctor's instructions to the letter. She had learned her lesson and until Charnay had pronounced him out of danger, Roget was forced to keep silent. Her very efficacious method of punishment, when he showed a tendency to depart from the rules and engage her in conversation, was to promptly leave the room. It was all that was necessary, for when she would shortly return his eyes would follow her in mute appeal, but his tongue was still.

On the morning of the fourth day Charnay pronounced his patient sufficiently recovered to sit up in a chair and receive callers. On the following day if he continued to improve he would be allowed to go out of the room, but he could do no work.

"For one day you may be a gentleman of leisure," Charnay said.

"What have I been for the past three days?" Roget growled.

"A prisoner." Charnay chuckled, as he helped him out of bed and placed a chair for him.

"Then I can roam around a bit, I suppose," Roget persisted as he allowed his friend to tuck a light coverlet about him.

"Yes, if you are in good company."

"May I make my own selection?"

"Perhaps, if you show good taste."

Adele's entrance put an end to the good-natured salies. She was delighted to see Roget sitting up, and he hastened to announce that the ban was removed and that he could talk as much as he pleased. Adele pretended that she would not accept his statement until assured by Charnay that it was correct. Charnay in turn asked her for her opinion on the sub-

ject to which she replied that she thought Roget should have a capable mentor, who should teach him how to talk since his silence had been of such long duration that it was probable he would be compelled to start anew.

Whereupon Charnay appointed her his instructor which was entirely satisfactory to Roget. Thus was his recovery made the occasion for merriment and jest.

During the day there were many callers who came to congratulate him upon his recovery, for it was reported on the first morning after the attack that he had been killed. Laudonniere was one of the first to arrive. He had not fully recovered from the fever, but was able to walk the few steps between his room and Roget's and to personally return his sword to him. He expressed his deep regret at the mistake he had made and asked forgiveness as a friend and a companion in arms which was as readily granted.

Later Ribault, himself, also came with Alphonse Darboux. It was the first time that Roget had met his old leader since they had parted in La Rochelle upon the return of the first expedition from Port Royal. They talked for quite a time about the incidents of the trip and the many happenings in France since they had separated, and of Roget's experiences with the Indians around Fort Caroline. Ribault announced that he was waiting with some impatience for Roget's recovery, for as soon as he was able he wished to send him as an emissary among the Indians, with whom he understood he had much influence. He was surprised he said that his old friend Satouriana had not come to welcome him as he had done upon his previous trip. Roget assured him that in a few days he would be able to fully carry out his commands.

A short time after Ribault had departed, Adele announced that Olata was on the outside and had made signs that he wished to speak to Roget. She told Louis that each day he had come to inquire by means of signs as to his condition. He

had seemed quite crestfallen that he could not see Roget, but had gone away happy to know that he was recovering.

"Invite him in," Roget said eagerly. "Olata is always welcome."

The Indian with stolid countenance stalked into the room, his body entirely nude except for the girdle about his loins; his bow and quiver in place, a strange contrast to the surroundings, but even his impassive demeanor could not hide his delight at the sight of Roget whom he had not seen for four days. He advanced and held out his hand, which the white man grasped warmly.

"Olata, I cannot repay you for the service you have done me," he said in the language of the Tumucuan. "You saved my life."

"It is not Olata whom you should thank," the Indian replied with dignity. "It was the guiding hand of the mother of Olata that led him to save his white brother."

"Then thanks be to the Spirit of the mother of Olata," Roget said reverently.

Roget offered a chair to Olata, but he shook his head and emitted what sounded to Adele like a discourteous grunt. Louis assured her, however, that it was a polite "no thank you." He explained to her that the Indian's usual sitting posture was on the floor with his legs folded beneath him, but Olata preferred to stand.

She could not understand a word of their conversation, but she listened with interest as her countryman talked to the savage in his own tongue. Roget suddenly broke into a hearty laugh at some remark of Olata's. She noticed that the Indian did not smile, yet there was a noticeable distention of the nostrils and a twinkling of the eye which she felt sure was evidence of his appreciation of the humor.

He says he cannot sit in a chair because his legs hang too far over," Roget explained. As she joined in the laughter she

noticed the very severe expression of the Indian as he gazed at her, and feared for a moment that she had excited his anger.

But his next words entirely dispelled any such idea. Roget took great delight in repeating them, "Olata says that he likes my squaw when she laughs," he said.

"You tell him that I am not your squaw," Adele said with pretended pique.

Roget repeated the words to Olata. For several minutes they conversed, and then Roget turned to her speaking quite seriously.

"I told Olata that you and I have always been like sister and brother, that I had known you since you were a child, and he says that one who is a sister to his white brother should be a sister to him. He would like to call you his white sister, do you mind?"

The idea was entirely new to Adele. She had never thought of being called the sister of a savage, yet she did not wish to offend or to wound his feelings, and furthermore, she remembered that she was greatly indebted to the Indian for saving Roget's life.

Louis watched her with half amused expression. "Remember that he is the son of a king, and that you will be a princess," he said half teasingly. Then as if reading her thoughts he became serious again. "It is the highest compliment he could pay you, Adele. There can be no harm. Of course, you will allow him to call you his white sister."

"Yes, of course, if you think I should," she hastened to reply. "Tell him that I accept with thanks, and greatly appreciate the honor." She decided that, judging by Olata's impressive gestures, his speech of acceptance must be fully adequate even for a princess.

But the great surprise came when Roget had finished his speech. Olata reached into the folds of his girdle and brought

forth a pearl, the size of an acorn, and solemnly handed it to her.

She gave a little scream of delight as she noted its size and beauty. "Is it for me?" she said excitedly to Roget.

"Yes," he said smiling in his delight. "Olata says he wishes to give you a little token."

Tears welled in Adele's eyes, and a simple expression of her thanks was all that she could utter. Much to her relief, but just as much to her surprise, the Indian turned to Roget and apparently took no further notice of her.

Then their conversation turned upon a matter of which Admiral Ribault had spoken.

"Why has not Satouriana welcomed the great white father who comes from the rising sun?" Roget asked.

"Satouriana will come to welcome the great white father when my white brother is well and can be present that he may speak the language of the white man for Satouriana."

Roget wondered whether the old chief merely wished an interpretation or that the son had persuaded his father to honor Roget by delaying the occasion on his account. He later found that both surmises were correct. Olata had played his part, but the wily chief wished an alliance with Ribault against his enemy, Ortena, and the sign language was too easy of misunderstanding when a matter of such grave importance was under consideration. He knew and trusted Roget, there could be no misunderstanding when he spoke.

"Tell Satouriana that any time after the sun has again risen he may come to welcome the great white father and Olata's white brother will stand by the mighty cacique of the Tumucans and speak the language of the white man for him."

This pleased Olata greatly, and he bade them goodbye, promising to return the following morning. But as he reached the door he turned suddenly.

"The enemies of my brother have gone south," he said.

"You mean Prevatt and La Roche?" Roget inquired quite interested.

"Yes, they came to one of our villages three days ago. Our people gave them food for they did not know that the white men were enemies of my brother."

"I am glad they did not know," Roget said thoughtfully. "They are my enemies, it is true, but they are Frenchmen and I would not have them starve."

"The heart of my brother is soft like a woman's, but I love him no less," the Indian said as he strode from the room.

In the evening Charnay and Alphonse Darboux came. Adele proudly displayed her gift from Olata. Roget was told of the happenings in the fort since he had been confined to his room. The caravels had been unloaded, tents put up and houses were being erected. On the morrow the large ships on the outside would be relieved of sufficient of their load to allow them to cross the bar at high water. It had been a very busy four days and the fort had resembled a beehive.

The future of Fort Caroline and New France seemed assured. Roget now heard for the first time how all semblance of mutiny or conspiracy had been successfully wiped out. Following the discovery that Prevatt was the author of the letter to Admiral Coligny, and obtaining further information regarding the conspiracy, Ribault had taken summary action. He had called a meeting of all the old colonists in the Chapel and had addressed them eloquently, appealing to their love of France and their religion and urging loyalty to each. Then he had announced the discovery of the conspiracy, promising amnesty to those who would freely confess any part they might have had in it or any knowledge they may have had concerning it, but threatening dire punishment to all who failed to speak out openly. His words had the desired effect. With Vasseur dead, Prevatt and La Roche having sought safety in flight, the rank and file had been deprived of leaders and each

one fearing that his fellow conspirator might tell first and thereby incriminate him, had hastened to tell all he knew. Hence the full details of the plot to overcome Laudonniere and Roget and capture the brigantines had been fully exposed.

Until late in the evening they sat making plans for the future. Adele told of her new quarters in the house now being especially built for women and which they would occupy the following day. Alphonse told of a visit he had made during the day to the forest and the wonders he had found there. Roget promised that he would take Adele at the first opportunity, and possibly Olata would go.

And so late in the evening the brother and sister departed and as she left the room she called a cheerful good night to Roget leaving a bewitching smile impressed upon his memory.

When they had gone Charnay busied himself about the room, but Roget neither saw or heard him. He was alone with his thoughts. His mind ran over the incidents of the past few days and a feeling of intense delight suffused him, he could almost thank Prevatt for making his happiness possible.

"I have a surprise for you," Charnay said as he held up before him an entire outfit of apparel. "I have a suit also. They were allotted to us from the supplies." Roget fingered the various garments with the delight of a boy as he contemplated a change from the threadbare clothing which he had been forced to wear for the past six months.

"I have had our chests brought back from the brigantine," Charnay went on. "They were left outside for fear the noise might disturb you. I will get one of the men to bring them inside."

"You are very good to me, Charnay," Roget said feelingly.

"God has been good to all of us," the Chaplain responded. "He has lifted up the light of his countenance upon us and put gladness into our hearts."

"Yes, the coming of our friends was a gift from Him,"

Roget was thinking of Adele.

"But a few short days ago," Charnay continued, "we were in the depths of despair, failure stared us in the face. We were about to return to France, broken in spirit, admitting to the enemies of our cause that we could not accomplish that which we had set out to do. Now all is changed. God in his mercy has brought help to us. The colony of the Huguenots shall not fail. We will build and build for His Name and Glory, we shall worship Him without fear, His word shall be carried to the savage tribes, and God willing, I shall be able to prosylite and lead them to Christ."

The face of the Chaplain shone with religious fervor. He had mapped out in his mind his work for the coming years, but little did he think that the vineyard was not for him, that the same God which he so devoutly worshipped would, in shaping the destinies of men and nations, wipe out in the twinkling of an eye all that he and his co-workers had accomplished, and that in the name of the Lowly Nazarene, his enemies would make a charnel house of his habitation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE RETURN OF LA ROCHE

Roget awoke in the morning before Charnay was astir. He was fully recovered from the effects of the blow and the enforced rest made him equal to any task. With the thought of again seeing Adele uppermost in his mind, he arose and with care selected the one he regarded the more exquisite of the two ruffs which had been allotted to him, donned his new doublet waistcoat and hose and with his rapier buckled at his side proudly strutted up and down the room with a light step lest he should awaken his friend. But his vain thoughts were rudely interrupted by a hearty laugh from Charnay's couch. He halted suddenly and grinned sheepishly as he caught sight of a pair of wide open eyes watching him from the bed.

"Captain Louis Roget, I believe," Charnay chuckled. "One would think you were dressing for a queen's ball."

"But my old clothes are not fit to wear—" he began and Charnay completed the sentence for him.

"With a lady," he said, laughing lightly. "Speak it out, I understand. You are a lucky fellow, Louis. I envy you."

Roget blushed and gazed blankly at Charnay as the latter sat on the edge of his couch. "What do you mean?" he asked in a tone of surprise.

Charnay, half rising, raised his eyes for a moment and studied Roget as a quizzical grin overspread his countenance. Then he stood erect and shrugged his shoulders. "Oh, nothing, Louis, if you cannot grasp my meaning. Perhaps I mean that you are lucky to get well so quickly," and walking over to him

he said abruptly. "Let me see your head."

Roget bowed his neck obediently. "All evidences of the blow have disappeared," Charnay said after an examination. "You're all right, the patient is discharged."

Roget laughed. "I am a gentleman of leisure today, you know."

"Yes, that's another reason why I said you were lucky."

Roget's inquisitive gaze followed Charnay as he walked away. What could he mean by those mysterious thrusts? His friend might readily guess he was in love with Adele, but what was there lucky in that? Any one would love Adele who really knew her as he did. The luck would be in having his love reciprocated. Could Charnay mean that? He would liked to have asked, but no, that was a matter too sacred even to discuss with one so close to him as Charnay. So he went out to the officers' mess for his breakfast still wondering.

It was quite early and he had to wait even for the meagre bite which his ardor would allow his constitution for its morning ration. But when finally he had satisfied its needs he strolled into the parade and was immediately impressed by the changes which had been made in the past four days. Huts, evidently for temporary use, had been built along the eastern wall of the fort and tents of various sizes pitched in the vacant spaces. The camp was just awakening to a new day and commotion was everywhere. Some of the garrison were just emerging from their sleeping quarters, some preparing the morning meal, others making ready for the day's work on the outside of the fort where Roget understood houses of permanent nature were being constructed.

The rays of the early morning sun bathed the distant forest with a hazy sheen but the fort and its immediate surroundings were still wrapped in the shadows of the heavily wooded bluff. A light westerly wind fanned Roget's cheeks and he drank in the ozone and thought how wonderful it was to again be in

the open. His thoughts were interrupted by the approach of a member of the watch who informed him that Olata, the Indian, awaited at the main gate having been denied entrance by the sentinel.

A new order had been promulgated by Ribault to the effect that none should enter or leave the fort between sunrise and sunset without a pass. Olata, it seems, had arrived before the sun and had been refused admittance. Then the sun had arisen and he was invited by signs to enter, the Indian had in turn proudly declined, taking his stand near the entrance and patiently waited. One of the watch, being of the old colony and knowing the friendship of Captain Roget for the Indian had come in search of the latter to inform him of the facts.

Roget hurried to the gate and found the Indian several paces away, in full war paint, his arms folded, his feather crowned head proudly raised, casting scornful glances at the sentinel who had refused admission to the son of Satouriana, the mighty cacique of the Tumucuaus. Roget took in the situation immediately and advanced with outstretched hand. "Olata, white brother welcomes the son of Satouriana," he said in the language of the Tumucuaus.

"Olata greets his white brother," the Indian said solemnly, "but he is sorry that he does not want Olata to visit him."

Roget explained the new ruling of Ribault.

"Of whom is the great white father afraid?" Olata asked in surprise. "Is not Satouriana, mighty cacique of the Tumucuaus his friend. Who else is there to harm him?"

"Perhaps the great white father does not know that Satouriana is his friend."

"Satouriana will come today to tell the great white father. He will come when the sun is there." Olata pointed to the zenith. "He will bring his warriors, and his jauvas, and his musicians, and he will make offerings of maize to the great white father, for he desires his friendship and his help in his

war against Outina of the Thimogoans."

This was not good news to Roget. He did not favor an alliance on such a basis with Satouriana or any other chief. Laudonniere had tried it and the plan had ended disastrously. The French had found the Thimogoans a brave and bloodthirsty foe and the Tumucuans hard friends to please. The expedition against Outina had cost lives and ammunition without compensating results, for when Laudonniere had realized his error and refused further aid against Outina, Satouriana had declined to supply him with maize, and as the season for planting had passed, the colony would have been in dire distress but for Olata's close friendship for Roget. And yet a treaty with the Indians upon a basis of peace was of vital importance to the colony, and a matter very close to Roget's heart on account of his relations with Olata. It was all a matter for Ribault to decide, of course, but he felt it his duty to give the Admiral the benefit of his own experience and he would take advantage of the first opportunity boldly to speak his thoughts. Thus did Roget reason as he and Olata entered the fort.

"Has Satouriana sent a messenger to the great white father announcing his coming?" he inquired.

"I, Olata, am the messenger of Satouriana. I came to tell my white brother so that he might inform the great white father, for Satouriana wishes my white brother to speak the language of the white man for him."

Roget had noticed the extra daubs of paint which adorned the bronze skin of the savage. "I now see why Olata has so honored us this day," he said glancing over the Indian's body.

Olata was equal to the occasion for he answered readily as his admiring eye passed over Roget's new outfit. "My white brother too has honored us. Perhaps the night winds spoke to him and told him of our coming."

Roget took the cue and allowed the impression to remain, it was just as well. "We will go to the great white father at

once," he said, "so that arrangements can be made for Satouriana's reception."

At Ribault's headquarters, he found a young man of pleasing appearance but a stranger to him, who, to his great surprise, came forward with outstretched hand.

"Ah, Captain Roget," the stranger said, shaking his hand cordially, "congratulations upon your rapid recovery. I am Charles Verdier. Adele has been keeping me posted as to your condition."

Roget had received a full account of the services rendered to him by Verdier and he returned the grasp thanking him heartily for all he had done. He had also heard Adele and Alphonse speak of him often, Adele much too often, he thought and while his sense of justice held intact the gratitude which was justly due, somehow Verdier's ready reference to Adele smothered all other kindly feelings toward one whom he regarded a rival.

"I have a message for Admiral Ribault. May I see him?" Roget spoke rather stiffly, Verdier thought.

"I will announce you," the aide said simply, going into the next room, from which he returned immediately.

"Admiral Ribault will see you," he threw wide the door and eyed the Indian curiously as Olata passed.

Ribault was seated at a table and arose as Roget entered, greeting him cordially, and asking particularly as to his health. Roget introduced Olata, interpreting the words of each to the other, and told Ribault of the coming of Satouriana at noon. The announcement pleased the Admiral greatly and he stated that he would immediately give orders for the reception, which he did, calling in Verdier and commanding him to see that a large canopy was spread in the center of the parade for himself and Satouriana and those who should properly be there and a space cleared for others.

"How many will there be?" Verdier asked.

Ribault propounded the same question to Roget, who in turn asked Olata.

"Satouriana comes with four of his sagamores, two of his jauvas, ten musicians, fifty warriors and twenty bearers of maize."

Roget interpreted the words to Ribault.

"A goodly company," the Admiral cynically observed. "I trust that his mission will be a friendly one."

"There is no doubt of that," Roget assured him quickly. "I would stake my life on the loyalty of Olata."

"Yes, Olata may be loyal," Ribault demurred, "but Laudonniere tells me that the old Chief is not always to be trusted."

"Pardon me, sir," Roget said respectfully, "but did Captain Laudonniere explain to you that Satouriana was loyal to us until conditions forced us to break faith with him?"

"Yes, possibly you are right, but I am not so sure that we should not take necessary precautions. The admission of so many savages to our fort might prove disastrous should their motives be dishonest. Of course, you understand," Ribault went on, "that I fully appreciate the value of an alliance with Satouriana, and I am willing to make a treaty with him. But I want the treaty made before I place too much faith."

Roget looked sorrowfully at Olata who stood with proud mien, waiting patiently to do the bidding of his white brother, in whom he placed implicit trust. It would be a severe blow to the young savage if he knew that the white man doubted where the Indian's faith was supreme. Yet Roget knew too that the wise old leader of the French colony was right from his viewpoint and that caution, when dealing with savages was never amiss. There was a question he would like to ask Olata, but he dreaded it lest the Indian might take offense, but there was no other way out of it so he proceeded in the most non-chalant way possible to avoid suspicion of his real motive. He explained to Ribault his intentions and turning to Olata, said,

"The great white father in his desire to offer full hospitality to the mighty Satouriana, cacique of the Tumucuan, wishes to know if Satouriana desires his warriors to leave their arms outside the fort, or does he want a place reserved for them within?"

Oлата answered without hesitation, "Satouriana comes to welcome the great white father to the land of the Tumucuan. He would not enter his home armed as an enemy. The arms of his warriors will be left outside."

Roget proudly repeated the answer to his Chief, who appeared to him quite satisfied. But Ribault had sufficient knowledge of men and affairs to respect the feelings of Roget, whom he sincerely liked, yet he would take no chances on a matter he considered so vital to the colony. So, when Roget and Oлата had gone, he ordered Verdier to secretly station thirty arquebusiers at a point of vantage unseen, where they would be ready if needed.

The conference ended, Ribault cordially shook hands with Oлата thanking him through Roget for his coming. "Don't fail to be on hand," he said to the latter in parting, "I will need you as my interpreter."

"I will be there," Roget replied as he left the room.

When he and Oлата returned to the parade, he beheld Adele Darboux with her brother Ernest standing near the officers' quarters. As he approached her he could imagine nothing more pleasing to the eye than this glory of womanhood. Tall and slender she was—dressed in a close fitting gown of white with the bodice cut low revealing the loveliness of her neck. The luster of her eyes, a shade lighter than when he had last seen them in the shadows of his room, were enhanced by her dark lashes and brows, a match for the truant locks that stole from beneath her bonnet. Her face brightened and a smile played about her perfect mouth as she spied him, and noted the pleasing effect of his changed attire.

"Ah, my prisoner has escaped," she said gaily.

"Yes, but willing to return to bondage," Roget replied gallantly, and then added more seriously, "but he would prefer to serve in the sunshine and air."

"Agreed," she replied, "now let's see how obedient a slave you will be. Ernest and I wish to take a trip to the forest. He says he can protect me but I am a timid maiden and am not sure that he can find the way. Perhaps you could come and bring Olata with you." Then smiling upon the Indian who stood respectfully at one side, she added, "Tell Olata that his white sister wishes him good morning, and invites him to go with us."

"Indeed, fair slave driver," Roget said with exaggerated obeisance, "you require a heavy body guard, I must say. Don't you think your humble slave is able to protect you?"

Her eyes sparkled and there was a ring of merriment in her voice, yet withal a note of concern was evident as she spoke. "You have been ill, you know. When you are well and strong, it will be different."

He would not accept her sympathy. "I am well and strong now," he said extending his arms with muscles taut, "but" he added with feigned servility, "the queen rules. I will extend her invitation to the savage."

Olata readily agreed, and he turned to her again, "your orders have been obeyed and the son of a king accepts the invitation of the queen."

"Then, let's go," blurted Ernest who had impatiently listened to what he regarded a superfluity of nonsense.

"Very well, come on," Roget said, leading the way with Adele, both laughing heartily at the lad's sudden outburst.

As they left the fort Roget explained the necessity of returning by noon, telling them of the coming of the Indians. Adele and Ernest were greatly excited over the prospect and Ernest was even willing to postpone the trip to the woods for

fear they might miss the gala occasion, but Roget assured him that they could easily return in time.

They passed around the fort to the east, and Roget saw for the first time the new building just started. The erection of which was an innovation as up to this time all, excepting the Chapel, had been constructed within the fort. They turned up the trail which led along the river to the bluff. Roget had told Olata to take the way that would be easiest for Adele, not being unmindful of the damage which might be done to his own apparel.

At the top of the bluff they turned to view the scene which the elevation allowed. Below them lay the fort, with its interior dotted with tents and houses. Beyond it, the marshlands stretching for miles along the river, flanked on the south by wooded highland and on the north by the sparkling water which spread like a vast lake to the verdant fringed shores in the distance. A flood of sun light bathed a scene of activity. In the fort figures moved hither and thither like ants in a hill, shallows plied between the wharf and the brigantines anchored in the river. One of the caracks could be seen dropping lazily down the stream with the ebbing tide on its way to unload the galleons anchored at sea. Flocks of white and gray heron dotted the marshland, pelicans skimmed the waters ready to dive for the unwary fish, cormorants hurried across the sky line and gulls soared aloft.

Adele gazed on the panorama in wonder.

"Here, there will be a great city some day," Roget said pointing to the south of the fort, "a city of the Huguenots, the pride of New France."

"Yes," Adele added in solemn voice, "a city where its people can worship God without fear."

They wandered along the trail which led through the forest, a trail found by the French when they first arrived. It was one of those natural avenues which had evidently been used by

wild animals and man in common since the beginning, being the easiest way from the beach on the east to the valley on the west, so the white men had widened it for their own use.

Through the forest primeval it wound yet as they wended their way Adele was enraptured with the newness of it all. The wonderful verdure, the wild towering forms of majestic beauty, the pine, the palm, the cedar, the live oak covered with streaming moss to its topmost branches, and nature as if not satisfied with the wealth of foliage, had added the twining grape vine, honey suckle and jasmine with the exuberant mesh of green. Nothing in her life had she seen to compare with it. She saw the magnolia with its glistening leaves, and Roget told her of the gorgeous white blooms that in the spring filled the forest with their redolence.

"We will come and see them in the spring," she whispered to him.

"Yes, we will come and see them in the spring," he echoed. But little did he think their wish would be without consummation, that the fragrance of the magnolia was not for Adele.

As they passed on, they saw the grazing deer wander into the path before them and startled by their presence gracefully raise its head for an instant then dart into cover, or the small black bear which would clumsily toddle away at their approach. They came to a place in the woods where there was an absence of undergrowth and a profusion of ferns grew in the black hammock soil.

Olata, who was in the lead, suddenly halted and raised a warning hand speaking to Roget.

"It's a rattlesnake," the latter explained.

"Where?" Ernest asked excitedly, as Adele came closer to him,

"Olata does not know yet," Roget told them. "He has only heard the warning rattle."

Quite deliberately the Indian cut a stick with a forked prong

and cautiously proceeded along the trail. Suddenly he thrust the stick into the ferns and with a jerk brought an enormous reptile into the path. As quick as lightning it coiled and struck but the Indian was out of reach. There was a whirring rattling sound as with head raised at least two feet above the coil the snake hissed defiance at the savage.

Oлата only laughed, then he spoke to Roget, who assented with a nod.

"A rattler will not retreat when he is attacked," Roget explained. "Oлата will show you evidence of his marksmanship."

The Indian stepped back several paces and fixed an arrow to his bow. Seemingly without taking aim he let the arrow fly and severed the snake's head from its body as if it had been cut with a knife.

Adele and Ernest looked on in amazement.

"Oлата is noted as a marksman even among the Indians where the use of the bow is taught from childhood," Roget said, proud of the prowess of his protege.

A little farther along they came to a vacant space where the morning sun beat upon a carpet of meadow grass.

"In the spring these spaces are covered with small, red flowers," Roget told them. "Blooming so closely that it has the appearance of a mat of fiery red. Would you like to hear Oлата's story of these flowers?" he asked.

"Yes, tell us," Adele and Ernest exclaimed in unison.

So Roget said, "In the beginning the gentle south wind asked the Great Spirit for a bride and spread a carpet of white flowers for her reception. And the Great Spirit sent him a maiden of wondrous beauty. But when the spirits of the other winds saw her they were enamoured and each strove for her love. In their jealous rage a terrible battle of the winds ensued and the carpet of white flowers was soaked in blood. The Great Spirit was angry and took the beautiful maiden away, saying, 'She shall not return until the blood stains are gone.' And

every spring since then the south wind has spread its carpet of flowers for the coming of the maiden, but they are always red, and all the winds have sent their clouds but the rain tears cannot wash away the blood stains. So the winds, even now, sigh and moan for the maiden who will not return."

"What a beautiful legend!" exclaimed Adele.

"Do you suppose Olata really believes it?" Ernest asked.

"Yes, I think he does," replied Roget. "He has some very strange beliefs, many of them quite wonderful, and his faith is perfect."

"He believes in God, doesn't he?" Adele asked solemnly.

"Yes, in his God, the Great Spirit, and with a sublime faith that would put to shame many a Christian."

"Does he believe in Christ?" Ernest queried next.

"I cannot say," Roget replied. "I have told him of Jesus of Nazareth many times, and he has asked me many questions, some of which I could not answer. But I do not think that he believes in the immaculate conception any more than you believe his legend of the flowers."

"How terrible." Adele raised her hands in horror and turned pitying eyes upon Olata who walked ahead of them quite unmindful that he was the subject of their conversation.

"It is terrible," Roget agreed. "I hope some day Charnay may lead Olata to Christ, but it will be difficult for he is very steadfast in his beliefs. He will listen as I interpret Charnay's sermons to him, but somehow I feel that he is only listening through respect for me. His life is as pure as the rain drops fresh from heaven, his code of honor is as strict as the laws of nature, and I cannot answer him when he asks me why our Christian brothers will break these natural laws which he, though savage and an unbeliever, holds sacred."

The conversation was interrupted by the panorama of ocean and beach which appeared before them as they rounded a bend in the trail. They had reached the edge of the slope on the

east side of the bluff, where the trail dropped down through the mass of scrub palmettos to the beach a mile or more away. On the north could be seen the mouth of the River of May, opposite which the four large galleons of Ribault's fleet rode at anchor a half mile off shore. The tide was low and the wide beach, which Roget explained was as hard and smooth as a floor, stretched to the south as far as the eye could reach.

The westerly breeze of the morning had died away and a fresh southerly wind from the ocean blew a respite from the heat of the mid-forenoon. The dull roar of the breakers came to their ears, but over and above the sound could be heard an occasional moaning as if borne to them upon the wind. Olata's quick ear caught it first, and spoke to Roget. All listened attentively but for a moment it was not repeated.

"Perhaps it is the wind moaning for the lost maiden," Adele said laughing.

But she had scarcely completed the sentence when it was heard again, this time more distinct, a low, deep moan as if some one was in great distress. It seemed to come from the palmettos almost at their feet.

Roget started down the trail followed by Olata. They had only gone a few steps when they almost stepped upon the body of a man lying in the sand, his head hidden beneath the shade of the large leaves of a saw palmetto. His clothes were ragged and torn. In a rent in his shirt they could see a gaping wound seared and bloody which the flies and ants had also discovered. Roget bent beside the form and raised the leaves to expose the face, and immediately recognized the features of La Roche, the runt. Roget looked about thinking that Prevatt might be near, no one was in sight and Olata's search of the surrounding territory revealed nothing.

La Roche was apparently unconscious, though he groaned as they raised him and carried him up the slope to a sluggish stream that drained a low place on the plateau. They cleansed

his wound and several applications of water on his face finally brought him back to consciousness,

"Water," he groaned, and ravenously sucked the drops that were squeezed from a cloth dipped into the stream. He recognized Roget and the Indian but looked in surprise at Adele and Ernest, who gazed pityingly upon him.

"Where am I?" he asked as he looked about in bewilderment.

Roget told that they had found him unconscious on the trail.

"Oh, yes, I remember, I had almost reached the fort," he murmured. "I wanted to go back to die among my people."

They let him rest with his head against a tree and gave him more water to drink.

His eyes wandered to Roget. "I did not strike you, Captain. It was Prevatt. I'm sorry."

"Where is Prevatt?" Roget asked.

"The dog," came like a snarl from the wounded man, "he tried to kill me. He wanted me to go with him to the Thimogoans and to bring them against our people. I refused and he struck me with his pike."

Roget knew that the country of Thimogoans was at least five days' journey from Fort Caroline. Was La Roche telling the truth, and if so, how long would it take Prevatt to carry out his nefarious scheme? This was a matter that should be reported to Admiral Ribault at once for it might materially affect his treaty with Satouriana. And yet he was slow to believe anything La Roche said.

"Where and when did all this occur?" he asked suspiciously.

"Two days ago, to the south," La Roche answered haltingly. "He left me for dead. Some Indians found me and took me to their village."

"How did you reach here?" Roget questioned further.

"An Indian brought me in a canoe part of the way, then he helped me to the beach, I walked all day, I could not reach the top of the hill."

Roget repeated the story to Olata and questioned him concerning the section presumably traversed by La Roche, and the probability of his statements being correct. He decided that the story was plausible and should have the immediate attention of Ribault.

La Roche evidently suspected that Roget doubted him for he continued in a pleading tone. "I swear I am telling the truth. Prevatt made me go with him, but I ask no mercy. Let me go back to die among Frenchmen, that's all I ask."

With Roget and Olata on either side of him and Adele and Ernest following behind, the strange procession made its way to the fort.

Thus did La Roche return to Caroline which he had left only a few nights before, branded as a traitor.

Alphonse Darboux was right, at least as to one of those who had stealthily gone away into the wilds. He had returned. But the other one, would he return also, wounded and repentant, begging only to be allowed to die among his companions, or would he return as an enemy and a scourge?

CHAPTER IX

SATOURIANA

Admiral Jean Ribault and Satouriana, Chief of the Tumucucans were not strangers. Over three years before or on the first day of May, 1562, to be exact, an expedition of Huguenots, with Ribault in command, had landed at the mouth of the River Welaka which he had named the River of May in honor of the day. The white men had lowered their boats and gone ashore fully armed and armored. The Indians seated beneath the trees looked in amazement at glittering corslet and morin, arquebus and halberd and thought the pale face creatures, who kneeled and thanked God for their safe landing, were children of the sun which they themselves worshipped. They came forward and strewed branches of the sweet bay tree before the strangers and offered gifts of maize and fruit. Ribault was delighted and made many presents of trinkets and beads to the chief. He remained several days and before departing, erected a stone pillar on the south bank of the river with the arms of France engraved upon it, which he understood had always been greatly respected by the Indians and they had always referred to him as the great white father who came from the rising sun.

Ribault was therefore greatly pleased at the prospect of meeting his old friend and being able to speak through an interpreter for the sign language had never been satisfactory. He took special pains to inspect Verdier's work in order that no detail should be overlooked. On the improvised floor of loose plank laid beneath the open tent where the meeting was to be

held he placed a pile of gifts, such as bright colored blankets, beads and various trinkets which he knew would delight the eye of the savage. He was equally careful also to see that arrangements had been perfected whereby the thirty arquebusers would be conveniently stationed where they could be readily called if needed.

Arriving at the fort with La Roche, Roget requested Adele to wait at the entrance to the house set apart for the single women until he could turn the prisoner over to a guard and have his wounds attended, after which he would return to her before he reported to Ribault. But on his way to Charnay's quarters he met the Admiral on his round of inspection. Ribault accompanied him to the doctor's and was so impressed with La Roche's story that he questioned Charnay and Roget particularly concerning the capabilities of Prevatt. The commander thought the matter of sufficient importance to order Roget to immediately summon all the captains, who were on shore, to his room for a council.

Roget decided to return first to Adele and notify her of his change of plans, and found Captain Verdier in earnest conversation with her, not at the entrance to the women's house where she had agreed to meet him but beneath the palm near the officers' quarters. He could see Olata and Ernest on the opposite side of the parade, the Indian busily engaged by means of signs in explaining to the lad the use of the bow. Somehow the sight of Adele alone with Verdier made him angry. As he approached them Verdier ceased talking to her, and waited, evidently for Roget to say whatever he wished and to move on.

But after notifying Verdier of the meeting, Roget waited to speak further to Adele before going to notify the others. Verdier also waited and an embarrassing silence was the result, much to the discomfiture of Adele. The two men eyed each other with expression of surprise which gradually changed into suspicious glances.

Adele finally broke the silence addressing Roget. She evidently thought an explanation was due him. "I met Charles on the way to the house and so we came over here to be in the shade," she said smiling, and then, as if seeking conversation, she added. "How did you leave your prisoner?"

"Charnay says he will recover," Roget replied rather abruptly. And then added in a tone which carried just a note of sarcasm, "since you are so busily engaged, I will go, but I wanted to say that I will try to arrange a place for you beneath the tent."

"Thank you, Louis," she said graciously.

"Since I am in charge of the arrangements," Verdier remarked dryly, "perhaps I could arrange a place for you, Adele, without having to try."

Roget glared at him and Adele looked in alarm from one to the other. She quickly stepped into the breach.

"I am sure that Louis will be glad to have you arrange a place for me, Charles. Won't you, Louis?"

"Yes," Roget snorted and walked away, quivering with rage.

He promptly found the others and in a few moments all the Captains on shore were gathered in Ribault's room. Laudonniere, Darboux, Roget and Verdier who came in just as the others arrived. He had been with Adele during the intervening time, Roget thought angrily.

Ribault briefly told them of Prevatt's intentions to arouse the tribe of Thimogoans against the colony. The questions to be decided were first, the ability of Prevatt to accomplish his purpose, second the danger to the colony should he succeed and third the extent they should go in making a treaty with the Tumucuans as a means of defense against the enemy.

Laudonniere as Commander of Fort Caroline for fourteen months and experienced in negotiations with the savages was first asked for his opinion. Weak and emaciated after his long illness he assigned Roget to speak for him, who explained that

Prevatt's ability to arouse the savage Thimogoans was merely a matter of conjecture; that the Thimogoans were a powerful and warlike tribe; that Outina, their cacique, was a brave and crafty leader and was always ready to take advantage of any opportunity to make war where gain was possible; that Satouriana was his hereditary enemy and that any attempt of Outina to cross the latter's territory would undoubtedly be resisted.

"I am advised by Olata, the son of Satouriana," he continued, "that the Tumucuans will today ask for an alliance with us both offensive and defensive, with the idea of leading an expedition against Outina at once."

"Would it not be advantageous to us to make such an alliance?" Ribault asked.

"In my opinion it would not," Roget replied promptly.

"Why,"

"Because we have found that such treaties have been failures. We made one with Satouriana in the beginning. We went with him against Outina and lost men and ammunition but that did not satisfy his savage desire to fight. Later in an expedition of exploration on our own account one of our companies found themselves in the country of the Thimogoans and to prevent a greater loss of life made an agreement with Outina which angered Satouriana. This ended our treaty with Satouriana, and after that he refused us food. Outina will be angered when he hears of your receiving Satouriana today. I am in favor of a treaty of peace with either or even both of them, in fact, I would not seriously object to a defensive alliance with Satouriana, but one in which we would be compelled to go to war at his bidding would be very unwise."

"Do you think he will be willing to make a defensive alliance with us?" Ribault next asked.

"Not if he thinks there is a possible chance of getting what he wants, which is our help against Outina."

Laudonniere agreed with all that Roget said. Ribault asked

each one to speak freely and Verdier asked, "Where do these Thimogoans dwell?"

Roget presumed that the question was addressed to him, but cross examination by Verdier was not to his liking, so he remained silent until it was repeated by Ribault.

"The nearest boundary of their territory is about thirty leagues to the southwest," he answered.

"And the Tumucuans inhabit all the land about us?" Verdier continued.

"Yes," Roget replied grumpily.

"Then it seems to me," Verdier said addressing Ribault, "that we cannot lose by complying with our neighbor's request. Make a treaty with him such as he wants and we will always have a powerful ally for our defense."

"There's much in Charles' contention," Darboux said to Roget. Alphonse Darboux was unaware that for the first time in all the years of their friendship these were the only words ever spoken by him to Louis Roget that caused a bitter feeling of resentment to be aroused. It was not that Roget minded his friend differing from him, but that he should take sides with Verdier.

"It was only this morning, Captain Roget, that you were defending Satouriana. Has your opinion changed?" Ribault asked, smiling kindly.

"Not at all," Roget replied readily. "I defended him on a question of honor, for I believe that Satouriana will keep his word."

"If the Indian is worthy of such confidence as Captain Roget seems to repose in him, why is he not worthy of such a treaty as one leader would make with another. I am in favor of an alliance offensive and defensive." Verdier was addressing Ribault, but he glanced at Roget in a manner that plainly said that his argument could not be refuted.

Roget caught the glance and wondered if the alliance with

the Indians was altogether the cause of Verdier's apparent antagonism to him. He accepted the challenge, however, and said slowly, "Captain Verdier's experience with the Indians may be different from mine, but I have found that it is not the Indians who have broken faith with us, but our inability to always keep faith with them." The fact that Verdier had never seen an Indian before his arrival in New France a few days before, which was well known to all present, was the only suggestion of sarcasm in the words of Roget.

But Verdier saw and came back. "I believe that Admiral Ribault will be able to keep faith even with a savage," he replied loftily.

The innuendo was not lost on either Roget or Laudonniere. The former saw the look of pain that flittered across the pale face of his former commander and he hastened to reply. "I, only am responsible for breaking faith with Satouriana. The exigencies of the case demanded it. At first he was very angry, but with the help of Olata, I was able to convince him that there was nothing else I could do. We are good friends now."

Verdier started to reply but Ribault put an end to the argument. "We are accomplishing nothing, let us see how we stand." And calling on each for their vote, he found that Verdier alone favored meeting Satouriana's terms. Darboux agreed with him in principle, but was willing to submit to the experience and judgment of Laudonniere and Roget. Ribault decided that inasmuch as there was a difference of opinion he would wait to hear Satouriana's proposal and then further discuss the terms if necessary.

The meeting adjourned, and as the others retired from the room, Roget requested Alphonse Darboux to remain as he had a matter to present to Admiral Ribault which would be of interest to him. Roget related to both of them the incident of Olata's gift to Adele Darboux and the compliment it con-

veyed, and in order to reciprocate the courtesy in a way that would be of special value to the colony, he suggested that Adele be allowed to present publicly a gift to Olata. This he said would be very pleasing not only to him but to the old Chief and all the tribe.

Both Ribault and Darboux immediately saw the effect such a ceremony would have upon the savages and readily agreed, Ribault offering a robe of blue cloth worked in yellow with the fleur-de-lis, which he had intended for Satouriana himself. This was even more than Roget had expected and he accepted the robe with delight at the thought of the pleasure it would give Olata and the good will the presentation would engender among the Indians. It did not occur to him that Adele might object.

The sound of drums in the distance announced the approach of the Indians, and they hurried to the parade. The part of the enclosure not taken up by tents was well filled with members of the garrison who had left their various duties in order to be present upon the arrival of the Indians.

Roget looked for Adele among the crowd. He finally found her again in the company of Verdier though her friend and companion, Clione Murat, as well as her brother, were with her. Verdier had made good in his selection of a place beneath the tent for them, for there could be none better, not excepting Ribault's. They were protected from the sun and were only a few feet from the centre where the principals in the pow wow would be located.

Roget's attitude toward Verdier was one of assumed indifference, though in reality he resented any attention paid Adele by him. On the other hand a consuming jealousy had suddenly wiped out all sympathy which Verdier had originally entertained toward Roget, and this jealousy was displayed by constant manifestations of concernment toward Adele.

Roget announced to her the plan for the presentation of the

robe to Olata. She did not at first understand that it was intended for her to be the principal in the ceremony and was enthusiastic over the idea, but when she realized the publicity it would necessitate, she refused point blank.

Clione thought it would be great fun and added words of encouragement, and Roget assured her that it would only take a minute.

But Verdier saw a chance to become Adele's champion. "I think it would be very undignified," he said.

"It is not the lack of dignity," she hastened to inform him. "It is because I would be embarrassed before the crowd."

"There will be little to say," urged Roget, taking no notice of Verdier's remark, "simply hand the robe to me, say it is for Olata and I will make the real speech in my interpretation to the Indians."

"I don't think you should do it, Adele," Verdier persisted patronizingly.

Roget turned on him fiercely. "It is the order of Admiral Ribault and the wish of her brother. Will that suffice?"

Verdier was quite taken back by the sudden outburst. In fact, it gave Adele an opportunity to put an end to what seemed likely to become more embarrassing than appearing in public.

She took advantage of the momentary silence to say, "Oh, Admiral Ribault orders it. Then, of course, I will. I am a good soldier."

"I will signal you when to come forward," Roget said more calmly as with a glance he left her to see that his friends the Indians received the proper attention.

They were just entering the gate and the crowd divided to let them pass. First came the drummers raising a terrible din on their rude gumbies. The juavas or medicine men, who also held the office of priest came next, grotesquely painted and accompanying the drums with their cantellations. Behind them marched Satouriana, his wrinkled face smeared with daubs of

red paint, with a double row of eagle feathers on his head. He was very tall, with long, straight, coarse, black hair, high cheek bones and black deep-set eyes. Although the weather was very hot, the cacique wore a blanket of bright colors, a gift of Laudonniere during the previous year, which, with a short tunic of deer skin dressed and highly colored completed his raiment, with the exception of his moccasins and a multitudinous array of beads and trinkets which adorned his body where ever they could hang. Beside him walked Olata, his son and successor in office, and immediately behind them were four sagamores or sub-chiefs, each wearing a mantle of coarse cloth made of grass and palmetto fibre. A tunic of deer skin and moccasins completed their apparel, their arms and legs being bare and tattooed in token of their rank. Behind the sagamores came the warriors, naked except for girdles about their loins, and unarmed, for Olata had kept his word. The maize bearers brought up the rear, each carrying a rude basket on his shoulders.

Ribault stood in the centre of the tent with his Captains around him, and awaited the approach of the visitors. As the drummers and medicine men reached the edge of the tent, they turned aside to make way for Satouriana, Olata and the four sagamores who advanced to within a few feet of Ribault, as the warriors divided and the maize bearers came through and stood in front of them. The whole affair was acted with a precision that would suggest a careful rehearsal.

Satouriana proceeded to deliver a short speech, which Roget interpreted, "Oh, great white father, who comes from the rising sun, Satouriana, mighty cacique of the tribe of Tumucucans comes to welcome you to Canico and the land of the Tumucucans. Satouriana brings offerings of maize that the great white father may eat and know the wealth of Satouriana, and Satouriana brings his warriors that the great white father may know of Satouriana's strength and the powers of the Tumuc-

cuans against their enemies. And Satouriana invites the great white father to pow wow, that they may unite against Outina."

Whereupon at a given signal the maize bearers deposited the baskets on the ground by the tent, and as they retired, the wall of warriors opened and closed behind them.

Speaking through Roget, Ribault expressed his love for his old friend and thanked him for the maize which he had so generously brought. He assured him that he would be pleased to pow wow with the mighty cacique of the Tumucucans on any subject of mutual interest. But that first he wished to present gifts to him in token of his regard.

A great shout went up from the Indians when Roget interpreted the words of Ribault. Then began the distribution of the gifts which ceremony consisted merely in the act of passing the various articles to Satouriana, who looked them over with a keen eye for appraisal, selecting such as he wished to retain and passing the others to his sagamores in such proportions as he deemed proper, which decision was final.

Adele, from her seat several feet away, saw that Olata was not included in the division of the gifts, and it was therefore with a feeling that justice was being done that she stepped forward at a signal from Roget to present the robe to him. She did not know that it was the custom of the Indians for the son to receive only that portion of the spoils which was given him by the father out of the family share. For that reason a special gift direct to Olata was regarded a signal honor among the savages.

As she stood by Roget's side, her close fitting white dress standing in contrast to the variegated colors about, her beautiful face suffused with blushes at the embarrassment of being the centre of all eyes, she presented a pretty picture.

The Indians could not understand her words, but every savage eye was glued upon her as she unfolded the rich colored robe with fleur-de-lis sprinkled in a field of deep blue. And

as she stepped forward and handed it to Olata, a murmur of applause ran over the copper colored assemblage.

She only said a few words, but Roget's explication in the Tumucuan tongue was a signal for a boisterous demonstration. Nor could the sincerity of the Indians be questioned. Even the hard wrinkled face of the old chief softened at the compliment paid his son and his tribe and the yells of the warriors resounded in the wooded hills and re-echoed in the hollows.

Olata was visibly surprised at the strange and unexpected procedure. Yet his reply came promptly and had the ring of sincerity. The members of the colony waited expectantly for Roget to tell them what he said.

"Olata, son of Satouriana, the mighty cacique of the Tumucuan, thanks his white sister for the gift so graciously bestowed upon him, and pledges for himself and his tribe their everlasting fidelity. As the mighty oak shields the tender flower from the burning rays of the sun, so shall the mighty tribe of Tumucuan watch over and protect the white sister of Olata from all harm and danger."

Adele returned to her seat amid the applause of all the assemblage, and now began the serious part of the ceremony, that of agreeing upon the alliance between the French and Indians.

Satouriana sat on a rug placed in the centre of the tent, with Olata by his side and the four sagamores at his back. Opposite was Ribault with Laudonniere, Alphonse Darboux and Verdier by him and Charnay just behind, all sitting on the rug in the same manner as the Indians. Between the two groups, a little to one side that he might speak to each more easily, Roget stood ready to interpret. Adele and Cleone sat on a stool a few feet away. Many of the women and children had crowded forward within the shadow of the tent, but the men stood outside unmindful of the scorching rays of the

early afternoon sun, in their eagerness to witness a meeting so strange and unusual.

Roget announced in French that Charnay would offer prayer and to the Indians he explained in their own tongue that it was the custom of the Huguenots to ask the blessing of the Great Spirit and His guidance in all their deliberations. During Charnay's impressive supplication the savages bowed their heads with as much reverence, to all outward appearances, as did the followers of the New Religion.

Satouriana presented his invitation to Ribault to join with him in an expedition against Outina, offering a strong plea for a treaty whereby the fortunes of the French would be inseparably allied with those of the Tumucuan. The demand for immediate action against the Thimogoans and the almost indissoluble terms of the treaty made its acceptance impossible.

Roget explained that the wily Chief was evidently beginning by asking for more than he expected and suggested that Ribault in turn urge a treaty of peace and good will only, without obligations on either side to engage in war for the other, claiming that such a proposal would be a greater opportunity for compromise and would end in an agreement on a middle ground more satisfactory to the French.

After some discussion in which Verdier differed with Roget, but was overruled, Ribault followed the latter's suggestion, and offered a treaty along the line indicated.

Satouriana had evidently anticipated a refusal as he readily came back with a counter proposition for an offensive and defensive alliance, with certain limitations as to the strength of the forces to be supplied by each in case of war. Roget knew that this was in accord with the ideas of Verdier which in itself made the proposal distasteful to him. He still contended for his treaty of peace without obligation to fight, pleading eloquently, but the savage chief was very obstinate and his sagamores applauded every statement he made.

Roget, being the interpreter and enjoying the confidence of both sides, was the most powerful factor in the parley. He was sufficiently familiar with the savage traits to know that the Indians were desirous of the strongest alliance they could make with the white man, appreciating the value of firearms in the wars against other savages. He felt sure that he could at any stage of the conference offer Satouriana an alliance for defense only as an ultimatum and that the Indian would gladly accept it. And, as he afterward realized, that was what he should have done. It was an error of judgment that he failed at the crucial moment, but he was sincere in his opinion that the constant wars which the savages engaged in would make even an alliance for defense only a costly luxury for the French colony.

Upon such incidents, apparently of minor importance at the time, it seems that the destinies of men and nations hang. Had not Roget made one more effort to gain his point, the pages of history of New France might have been written differently.

Ribault and the rest had just decided to accept Satouriana's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance for a period of three moons, but Roget had asked for the privilege of making one more plea for the treaty which he and Laudonniere preferred. His request was granted by Ribault with the understanding that if the plea should fail, Satouriana's proposal would be accepted.

Roget made his speech to the Indians, had assured them of his friendship and loyalty and that it was to the interest of the Tumucuan and the Thimogoans as well as the white men that all should live in peace. Satouriana had just begun his reply, every savage eye was upon him, every ear alert to hear his words. Roget's attention was riveted, for he knew that the crafty Chief, believing that he had urged his point as far as possible was weakening toward milder terms.

Suddenly there came a commotion in the outer ranks near

the gate, muffled voices, an opening in the wall of warriors, and an Indian runner, panting with exertion, his copper colored skin glistening with perspiration stood before the Tumucuan Chief.

Satouriana had halted his harangue. There must be important news for Tolita, one of his fastest runners to come so unceremoniously into this conference with the white men. What was it? Tolita spoke in jerky sentences, between deep breaths. There was a deathlike stillness among white and red men alike, and when the runner ceased speaking, a nervous wave stirred the crowd of naked savages. Ribault and his captains waited expectantly, the white men and women craned their necks looking with breathless interest to Roget to unfathom the mystery. He turned to Ribault, and his words were simple but somehow his tone chilled the listeners.

"The Spaniards have landed twenty leagues to the south, and Prevatt has joined them."

No one spoke for a minute after the announcement until finally Ribault broke the silence. "How does he know they are Spaniards?" he asked.

Roget repeated Tolita's story; how early in the morning six ships, larger than the French galleons had anchored off the mouth of the River Selooe. Boats had come ashore and soldiers had landed, asking by signs where the French colony was located. They did not speak the language of the French nor of the English, with whom the Indians had come in contact during the recent visit of Sir John Hawkins. They had given presents to the Indians. Prevatt had happened to be in the village of Selooe at the time and spoke their language. He was taken to the leader, was made welcome and went with them in their boat.

"That the newcomers are Spaniards is my own opinion," Roget concluded.

Satouriana and his sagamores were discussing the news

brought by Tolita and Roget could catch an occasional word. They were debating whether it would not be better to wait and see who the newcomers were, perhaps they would be even more wonderful than the great white father and a treaty with them would be of greater advantage.

Then Roget was attracted by the words of Ribault. "Yes," he was saying, "I doubt not that they are Spaniards, for as some of you know just as we were leaving Dieppe, I received a letter from Admiral Coligny advising me that a fleet under Don Pedro Menendez of Avilles was preparing to sail from Spain and that his destination was New France."

The name Avilles awakened memories in Louis Roget and a consuming rage possessed him. The Spaniards, his half kin yet his mortal enemies were within twenty leagues and the traitor, Jean Prevatt, was with them. All questions in his mind as to the terms of the treaty with the Tumucuanes were now removed. The strongest alliance of offense and defense was of the utmost importance. Turning to Ribault he so expressed himself.

"That is a complete reversal of your position," Ribault said in surprise."

"But the arrival of the Spaniards changes everything," Roget replied earnestly.

"Captain Roget need not become frightened," Verdier said with a sneer, "France and Spain are not at war."

Roget looked at him in pity. He evidently did not know the Spaniards.

"Yes," Ribault added, "Admiral Coligny has instructed me especially that we must not encroach upon the Spaniards nor allow them to encroach upon us."

"It is their encroachments that I fear," persisted Roget.

"But under the orders of Coligny we must wait for them to encroach," Ribault said with an air of impatience.

The pow wow had developed into separate caucuses of the

two races. Roget could hear and understand fragments of the Indian talk and knew it might be more difficult to obtain what he desired, since there had suddenly appeared what might prove to be competition for their friendship.

With Roget's change of position to that of Verdier's, much to that gentleman's evident displeasure, the French were in accord, as Laudonniere seemed willing to follow Roget. So they decided to accept Satouriana's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance without reference to time. Roget had just turned to make the announcement to the Indian, when Satouriana anticipated him by accepting the original offer of the white men for a simple treaty of peace and good will without obligation on either side to assist the other in case of war.

Roget repeated the proposal to his comrades. There was nothing they could do but accept it, for otherwise they would admit their fear of the Spaniards, and weaken their position with their neighbors. So upon these terms the pipe of peace was smoked and the treaty thus ratified.

With many protestations of good will the Indians took their departure, apparently well satisfied with the results of the meeting. Roget, however, was quite chagrined at the outcome. He had failed to obtain his objective. However much the others may have thought his eloquence had persuaded the Indians to accept his original proposal, he had heard enough of their discussion to know their real motives. He knew that Ribault and the others realized that his persistency under present conditions had prevented an alliance which would have been for the best interests of the colony. He heard Verdier tell Adele so, and he himself could not deny it. That she should think he had failed was the great hurt. He saw her walk away with Verdier, saw them pass through the gate of the fort on the trail to the forest, and a great loneliness came over him.

CHAPTER X

PEDRO MENENDEZ

Confined beneath the hatchway of the Spanish galleon, San Palayo, Jean Prevatt had spare time to review the events of a very eventful week. He was not yet ready to decide whether the wheels of fortune had turned a trick for or against him when it allowed him to fall in the hands of the Spaniards at the Indian village on the River Seloee, called by the French the River of Dolphins.

But Jean Prevatt had always been an opportunist, and in seeking immediate advantages without regard for principle of ultimate consequences, he had thus far managed to live, if not to always prosper. And through it all an abiding faith in his luck had been maintained. Narrow escapes, many of them had been his portion, and, according to his code, if he could escape once he could escape again. In fact, his association with the Huguenot colony had dated from the narrowest escape of all, for it was by the breadth of a hair that he had missed the hangman's noose in Paris and was sent to join the expedition to New France. It was no less a personage than the Queen Mother herself who had canceled an obligation by saving his neck and recommending him to Coligny, for Catherine de Medici was not overly careful in her selection of instruments for political intrigue. Nor did Prevatt object in the least to signing a document swearing that he was a believer in the Huguenot faith so long as it saved his life and gave him the rank of third in command of the expedition.

With an insatiable love for conspiracy and an inordinate

ambition to rule he had conceived the letter to Coligny, hoping as a result to supplant Laudonniere. The contemplated return of the colony to France had furthered his schemes, but the sudden arrival of Ribault had ruined them. His attack on Roget was a part of the game; he was not sure that he had killed him and did not care. He was sure that he had killed La Roche and was glad. The chicken-hearted runt had crossed his purpose to arouse the Thimogoans against the Huguenots and had paid the consequences. Not that he cared aught for Outina or any other savage, but through their instrumentality he had hoped to reap revenge and to again align himself with the conspirators at the fort.

But once more Fortune had changed his plans. He had arrived at Selooe footsore and hungry, and had been bountifully fed by the Indians. Beneath the shade of a friendly palm he lay, lost in a dreamless sleep, where they had accidentally found him. It was truly a coup de pied, for he was rudely awakened by a kick in the side and in answer to his oath in French, he received the like in Spanish, and there beyond the inlet he could see six large galleons riding at anchor.

His weapons had been appropriated and he was taken to the Camp Master who, with twenty soldiers, had come ashore to reconnoiter. His knowledge of the Spanish language was to him advantage, for he was able to explain his reason for being alone in the Indian village. Upon mention of Fort Caroline, the Camp Master was greatly pleased, and said that the Adelentado, Don Pedro Manendez wished particularly to know concerning the Huguenot colony, and that he would take the prisoner on board the San Palayo, the flagship, that the Adelentado might question him. But when they arrived on board the Adelentado was evidently too busily engaged in other matters to give attention to him, so he was sent below to wait the commander's bidding.

Prevatt listened to the sounds which plainly told him that

the galleon was getting under way. As to its destination he had not the remotest idea, but whether Spain, the Indies or some point in New France, it made little difference to him so long as Fortune smiled. His speculations were interrupted, however, by the appearance of two soldiers who came to hale him before the Adelentado.

His appearance, miserable enough, was made more wretched by contrast with the well-equipped soldiers of Pedro Menendez. He had departed from Caroline before new supplies had been distributed, and his apparel, already over worn, had become mere tatters after four days rambling through the scrub palmetto. His face was covered with scraggly, unkempt beard and his forehead and neck were blistered by the constant burning of the sun. Yet his appearance altogether belied his feelings, for he was in no way cast down. Food and rest had given him encouragement, and as he gained the deck of the huge round-stemmed floating castle and noted its compliment of men and armament, his sole thought was to turn all this to his own advantage. His quick eye noted, from the position of the sun, that the course was northerly with all sails filled with a fresh southeasterly breeze and that the other galleons were following in perfect formation. He decided that the River of May must be the fleet's objective, in which case a clash with the French was certain. He was saved the trouble of arousing the Indians again Fort Caroline, for here was the instrument which fortune had thrown into his way.

So when Prevatt was ushered into the cabin of Pedro Menendez, the glances of disgust which he received from its occupants in no way dispelled his confidence in the ultimate outcome of the plans upon which he had suddenly determined.

Don Pedro Menendez de Avilles, Knight of the Order of Santiago, and by the decree of King Phillip II., Governor and Captain General "of the Coast and Country of Florida," was slowly pacing the floor before a table at which sat three men.

One of these was a Jesuit priest, Father Mendoza, the Vicar of the expedition. The others were Don Pedro de Valdes, the Camp Master, and Captain Juan de San Vicente, the Adelen-tado's aide and intimate friend.

In the full vigor of his forty years his clear, ruddy complexion and calm, impassive face bore no evidence of the hardships which Pedro Menendez had encountered since a lad of fifteen in the services of his king. His neatly trimmed beard of raven hue equalled in coarseness and color the bushy brows, from beneath which quickly contracting pupils shot piercing glances, seldom failing to register in his brain a perfect appraisal of the object encountered. His dress was neat and simple. A white unspotted ruff incased his neck, doublet of light material perfectly fitted his sturdy form, and hose of a dark brown displayed the muscles of his legs in shapely contour. He took a seat beside the priest as Prevatt entered between the two guards.

The prisoner eyed the group and plainly read in the kindly face of Father Mendoza, the sympathy that filled his heart for the pitable object before him, but the countenance of the Adelen-tado was a mask. In the breast of that dignitary, where, it was said compassion was a stranger, there was no feeling other than that this creature might be a means to an end, and strange as it may seem the thoughts in the mind of Prevatt were the same in reference to Menendez.

"You speak Spanish, I am told," Menendez said sharply.

The prisoner bowed humbly. "Yes, sir," he replied in perfect Castillian, "it was my good fortune at one time to be an emissary of her majesty, Catherine de Medici, upon a secret misson to your wonderful country. I was there several years. It was necessary for me to learn the language."

This was a lie, for he was there as the representative of a band of smugglers, but he knew the effect that the name of the Queen Mother, the devoted friend of King Phillip and the

champion of the Catholic cause in France, would have upon these Spaniards.

The four men at the table looked at one another in astonishment, that this miserable being could so glibly speak their tongue and so familiarly refer to one before whom all the powers of Europe stood in awe.

"What is your name?" Menendez continued.

"Captain Jean Prevatt," the prisoner answered promptly, and the priest was still further moved by the realization of the unfortunate predicament of this gentleman of rank.

Menendez, although surprised, was not so easily impressed. He looked at Prevatt suspiciously. "Is her Gracious Majesty in the habit of sending heretics upon her secret missions?" he asked with just a note of sarcasm.

But Prevatt replied undauntedly, "No, sir, Her Gracious Majesty sends only those who are tried and true."

"Then you are a Catholic?"

"Yes, sir." Prevatt gave the sign of the cross.

"Why are you here with the Lutherans, trespassing on the lands of His Majesty the King of Spain?" Menendez asked sternly.

"I am here at the bidding of her Majesty, that I might secretly report to her the progress of the heretic colony." This was another lie, for Catherine did not send Prevatt to New France at all—he had come to save his own neck—and when he had suggested that he would keep her advised upon the affairs of the colony, she had promptly declined his services.

"Your Excellency," he continued, "is, of course, more familiar with the doings in Europe than I, for it has been sixteen months since I left France. I have had no word since then, nor have I had an opportunity to report to her Majesty. The help that was to be sent did not arrive. For fourteen months I have been in this wilderness without the comfort of the Church." Again he made the sign and Father Mendoza,

visibly affected, softly uttered a word of prayer. Prevatt saw that he was making splendid progress.

"Five days ago," he went on, wiping his eye with the back of his hand, "Admiral Ribault arrived with six ships, and evidently through information which he brought, I was suspected. I was put to the test, I declared my faith in the Church of Christ, I was expelled from the fort, sent forth into the wilderness to die and but for the friendly Indians I would have starved." He paused and allowed a faint sob to partially choke him.

"My poor son," the priest murmured, "thou hast indeed suffered."

The shrewd and calculating Adelentado watched the prisoner closely as he listened, and while he believed not in the sincerity of the man he could detect no flaw in his story. Perfectly familiar with the dates of the sailing of Laudonniere and Ribault from France, he knew that Prevatt told the truth in that particular. That Catherine de Medici would have a spy in the camp of the heretics was very plausible, for had he not been assured by Francisco de Erasso, Secretary to King Phillip, that it was the Queen Mother herself who had persuaded King Charles to agree that any act committed by the Spaniards against the Lutheran heretics would not be regarded an act of war against the government of France. Furthermore, the fellow's story of his having been befriended by the Indians agreed with the account brought to him by Don Pedro de Valdes. The prisoner's appearance bore sufficient testimony of his suffering. Therefore any doubt as to the fellow's integrity would, at least for the present, be laid aside by the Adelentado and his story accepted with whole-heartedness that would allay any suspicion or questioning. But if Prevatt should prove false, his life would pay the penalty.

Menendez's tone was kindly. "Yes, you have indeed suffered," he said, echoing the words of the priest, "but you are

now among friends provided you place your loyalty to the Church before your loyalty to France."

Prevatt lifted his eyes sanctimoniously, "What is loyalty to a kingdom on earth when the Kingdom of Heaven is at stake?"

Father Mendoza's sympathy was now completely won, and he hastened to speak in behalf of the unfortunate whom he feared might be tortured unnecessarily by the inquisitiveness of the Adelentado. "Thy words are well spoken, my son," he said, and turning to Menendez he continued, "I commend this man to your good offices. That he has come amongst us so fortunately is but a sign that God, Our Lord, had granted a great mercy in our expedition against the heretics." And again to Prevatt, "My son, it is well that you should know to whom you speak. This is the Adelentado of Florida, Don Pedro Menendez de Avilles—"

"His name is known everywhere as the synonym of valor," Prevatt hastened to interpose before Father Mendoza could proceed, and even the Adelentado's impassive face softened under the skillful flattery.

"And this is Don Pedro de Valdes," the priest continued, "and this is Captain Juan San Vicente, and I am Father Mendoza of Yerez, the Vicar in charge. Gentlemen, I commend Captain Jean Prevatt to you. It is my belief that in the service of the Blessed Redeemer he has been basely treated by the heretics."

The two officers arose and bowed stiffly, though the courtesy was to the priest's request rather than to the ragged traitor whom they viewed with contempt. Menendez did not move, Father Mendoza had proceeded much more rapidly than he would have wished, but it might, after all, favor the ends he most desired. He decided immediately to question Prevatt, even before he allowed him the privilege of a change of raiment.

It had been the ardent hope of the Adelentado that he

might be able to attack and destroy Laudonniere's colony before the arrival of Ribault and the French Armada. For this reason he had hurried on from Selooe, named St. Augustine by him in honor of the day on which he had sighted Florida, and had left one of the smaller galleons with the women, children and slaves on board under the charge of Captain Francisco Bendano with instructions to proceed within the harbor and there to lie at anchor to await the result of his reconnoissance. If this man Prevatt told the truth and Ribault had already arrived, it would necessitate a complete change of his plans.

He questioned the prisoner closely upon the condition of Fort Carolina and the strength of the French Armada. Prevatt gave him a minute account of the location of the fort and its weak condition at the time of his departure, explaining that it was probable that Ribault had improved its condition since that time. As to the strength of the Armada, he had only the word of some of the newcomers with whom he had talked during the few hours he had remained in the fort after their arrival. All he knew, he frankly related to Menendez, explaining the position of the caravels in the harbor with the information given him that there were four large galleons anchored outside. As far as he knew, the French did not suspect the presence of the Spaniards in the vicinity and as France and Spain were at peace they had no fears of an attack. Menendez specifically inquired as to Laudonniere's relations with the Indians and was told of the friendly alliance which existed between the French and the powerful tribe of Tumucuaus which inhabited the surrounding country.

Having obtained all the information possible, the Adelentado delivered Prevatt over to Father Mendoza who sought the office of protector of one who, he believed, had suffered greatly in the cause of the Church. The priest immediately saw that his charge was provided with all things needful for his com-

fort and when, in due time, Prevatt appeared on deck arrayed in new apparel one could scarcely recognize in him the miserable creature that was so recently brought on board. To say that he was well pleased with himself would be putting it lightly, for under the protection of Father Mendoza he had no fears and, furthermore, he knew the value of his information to the Adelentado.

And fortune continued to smile, scoring another point in his favor, for in the late afternoon there could be discerned upon the horizon four large French galleons riding at anchor opposite the mouth of the River of May just as he had said.

No sooner were the ships of the French discovered than Menendez called a council of his captains. All came on board the San Palayo and assembled in the cabin of the Adelentado to which meeting Father Mendoza and his charge were admitted, for the information of the Frenchman had thus far proven so valuable that Menendez desired his captains to have full knowledge of all that he himself knew, that there might be no criticism of his having trusted a stranger too far. And to further strengthen his position he took the precaution to have Father Mendoza introduce Prevatt to the council, thereby lending the strong arm of the Church to any plans that might eventuate. The priest was forceful in his recommendations of one who might appear to be a traitor in soldiers' eyes, but a hero and a martyr to the clergy. He eloquently told Prevatt's story of persecution and suffering at the hands of the heretics and commended him to them in no unmeasured terms. Then Menendez had Prevatt explain briefly the points of military value.

Having laid the foundation for the plans which he had already partially evolved in his own brain, Menendez addressed the others.

"It is my opinion," he said, "that since the arrival of Ribault, the heretics have ensconced themselves in their fort so that it

will be difficult to take. But here are four of their galleons and we have five against them. What is the opinion of you gentlemen that we should do? Shall we risk a battle now, or shall we return to St. Augustine and allow the heretics to remain unmolested?"

There was silence for a moment, when Francisco de Recalde, one of the captains, spoke. "Would it not be best to return to San Domingo with the ships we have and gather the others which were scattered in the storm and also the six that are due from Biscay and Asturia? With these and the two armed ships, the horses, infantry and supplies which his Majesty has ordered to be given in Cuba, we will return in the spring and proceed in force against the heretics"

"These are matters to be considered," was the comment of the Adelentado, as he covertly glanced at the faces around the table.

"Rather than risk a return all the way to San Domingo," suggested San Vicenti, "would it not be better to return to St. Augustine, disembark and fortify the harbor, then send the ships to Cuba to give tidings of the Armada we are in need of. In this way we will hold the land for his Majesty and in the spring when the infantry, horses and supplies arrive we can go against the heretics."

"Suppose the heretics should attack us at St. Augustine," interposed Captain Andress Lopez Patino. "Would we not be at their mercy with our ships away, and the heretics provided with an armada for an attack by sea as well as by land."

"But, according to the information received before we left Spain, which is born out by the statement of Captain Prevatt, the heretics will not attack us unless we molest them," said Pedro de Valdes, speaking with an air of assurance

"Yes," added San Vicenti." That was the information given us by Don Fransisco de Erasso, secretary to his Majesty, under his secret agreement with Her Majesty Catherine de

Medeci. In fact, it was the understanding that Coligny, the leader of the heretics in France, would instruct Ribault not to encroach upon us."

These statements were passed unnoticed by Menendez. He addressed Lopez Patino. "I would judge by your remark that you favor an immediate attack."

"Either that or return to San Domingo as suggested by Captain Recalde, for I do not put great store in the word of a heretic."

Captain Alonzo Perez, the commander of the San Miguel, the smallest of the galleons, was the only one who had not spoken.

"What think you?" Menendez asked, addressing him.

"There is one advantage in waiting for the other ships, horses and supplies," Perez replied, "As the fort of the heretics is located inland we could use our horses and infantry for a land attack while the fleet captures the harbor, thereby preventing succor coming to them from France, and also cutting off their intercourse with the Indians. In this way we could wage war upon them without danger to ourselves."

Prevatt had carefully followed the statement of each captain, at the same time carefully studying the face of the Adelentado to determine the effect upon him, but there was nothing in the impassive countenance that would indicate the workings of the master mind. The renegade thought only of the results of the conference as the same would affect his own fortunes. The return of the fleet to San Domingo would allow him to return to France by way of Spain, but it would deprive him of revenge upon those he regarded his enemies in Fort Caroline. Furthermore his usefulness to Menendez would be ended. Somehow there was a feeling of disappointment at the thought of the Spaniards turning back.

Menendez, having heard from all his captains, spoke his own mind. "The heretics and those of the true religion cannot

abide in the same land," he said speaking very deliberately. "It is their extermination or ours. Our presence is already revealed to them. Four of our ships are without foremasts. If they should pursue us we would be at their mercy. There are only four ships outside the harbor, but there are three others inside unloading. When Ribault is apprised of our presence he will come out and with all seven of his ships we will be outnumbered. The time to strike is now while they are separated." His fist came down hard upon the table, "Tomorrow it will be too late, there is nothing we can do, gentlemen, but fight and fight now." And without awaiting for a dissenting voice he turned to Father Mendoza and said solemnly: "We will now pray to our Lord, beseeching him to favor us in everything and grant us victory over our enemies."

All bowed their heads reverently as the priest offered prayer, and when it was ended it seemed that all were in perfect accord with the will of the Adelentado. So he ordered them to their ships to prepare for battle, giving each one their instruction as to their positions, commanding Captain Alonzo Perez with the smallest of the galleons, a patache, to remain near the flagship for his aid.

When the captains had departed to their own ships they sailed along with fair weather until when within about three leagues from the French fleet the wind suddenly died away and there was much thunder and lightning and a heavy rain which continued until nine o'clock at night. Then the sky became clear and the wind blew from the land, but the delay forced Menendez to change his plans. He summoned Prevatt and questioned him closely regarding the bar at the mouth of the River of May and the depth of the water at low tide. Then he again called the captains on board the flagship to issue new instructions.

"It will be almost midnight when we reach the enemy," he said when they had gathered in his cabin, "and it will not be

safe to grapple with them in the darkness, for by the use of incendiary missiles the damage might be greater to us than to them, as they own the land and could escape in their skiffs and boats. I have decided, therefore, that we will anchor in front of their bows in such a manner that when at daylight our cables are let loose, our sterns will overlap their prows and we can board them. They cannot be aided by their other vessels which are in the harbor and cannot come out at night, and at dawn the tide will be low. It will be noon before the tide is sufficiently high to allow them to come out, and by that time we will have captured the others."

"Suppose they open fire upon us, shall we return it?" Captain Francisco de Recalde asked. Menendez smiled cynically. "They will not open fire, in my opinion, for they have been ordered not to molest us. But if they do, it will be the heretics who have made war on his Catholic Majesty, the King of Spain."

"But in such case—" began Lopez Patino.

"In such case," continued Menendez, "give them all you have in the name of God and Spain."

The captains were told the ships they were to take in order of their location, the San Palayo, going first, would take the farthest one and the others following in succession according to their position in line, excepting the patache which would remain by the flagship. Then the captains returning to their ships and the fleet proceeded in perfect formation.

About midnight, as they neared the French fleet, Menendez called Prevatt to the bridge beside him and they stood with Valdes and Captain San Vicente as the San Palayo swung ahead of the French vessels and rounded in front of the one farthest north, dropping anchor between it and the shore. They watched the dark outline of the others as they came into place anchoring with their poops in close proximity to the prows of the Frenchmen. They were so close that they could discern

the Royal Standard of France on the mainmast and the pennant on the foremast of the nearest ship.

Not a sound had come from the French Armada. Menendez had cleared his decks in case they might open fire, but not an unfriendly move was made. The Huguenots were faithfully observing the admonitions of Coligny, not to encroach upon the rights of others.

When the vessels were all in place Menendez had the trumpets sounded, hailing the French, and they answered hailing with theirs. The salutes being ended Menendez called out: "Senors, whence comes that Armada?"

"From France," came a voice in fairly good Spanish, from across the water.

"What is it doing here?" Menendez asked harshly.

"We are bringing infantry, artillery and supplies for a fort which the King of France has in this country and for others which he will build." There was a ring of defiance in the voice.

"Are you Catholics or Lutherans, and who is your general?" Menendez shouted.

"We are of the New Religion, called Huguenots and our commander is Admiral Jean Ribault," came the reply.

"Where is your general?" Menendez inquired next.

"He is ashore at the fort which the King of France has built," and without a pause the voice continued, "and who are you? What Armada is that? Who is your general?"

The Adelentado replied: "He who asks this of you is called Pedro Menendez. The Armada belongs to the King of Spain and I am the general. I come to hang and behead all the Lutherans I may find on the sea and in this land. And thus do I bring instructions from my King which I shall fulfill at dawn when I shall board your ships. If I should find any Catholic I will give him good treatment."

Prevatt could hear the voice angrily translating the words

of Menendez to his companions, and when the full import was realized there arose a sullen roar of anger out of which came a volume of maledictions uttered in French against everything Spanish. When silence was at last restored the first voice came clear in the night air: "We care not for you Pedro Menendez, or your King, Don Phillip. If you are so brave why wait until dawn, come now, you dog of a Spaniard."

At these words Menendez gnashed his teeth with rage and said to the others with him: "I will make these heretics repent of these insults," and, calling out in a loud voice, he answered them, "I will come now. Loose the cables," he shouted to his own men. "Board the enemy! Santiago! At them! God is helping! Victory!"

His soldiers were slow in obeying his orders, and he leaped from the bridge to assist by his presence and commands. But the cable was wound around the capstan and could not be quickly loosened and much delay was occasioned by many trying to perform the act at once. Above the noise of the hurry and scurry could be heard the voice of Menendez urging his men. But the French had also heard these preparations and by the time that the San Palayo had dropped back to the position of the French vessel, its crew had cut its cable and it was floating away in the darkness.

In the meantime orders had been shouted to the other Spanish ships to loosen the cables and board the enemy, but the change of plans found them unprepared for the sudden command. All the French ships followed the example of the first one and were soon scurrying away, two towards the north and two in a southerly direction.

Menendez shouted orders to Captain Andress Lopez Patino, who was on La Esperanza, the nearest galleon, to follow the French ship opposite him and to repeat the orders to the other captains to do the same. This was done, and the San Palayo and La Esperanza with the patache, the San Miguel, followed

the two that had gone north and the others followed those going south.

The heavy Spanish ships, impeded by loss of masts and rigging, were no match in speed for the swift French vessels which had hastily unfurled their sails and were in full flight.

Prevatt, standing on the bridge of the San Palayo, experienced a strange sensation as he watched his own countrymen fleeing before the ships of Spain, and renegade as he was, there was a fleeting sense of remorse at his own base conduct. But it was only for a moment, he shook himself, forced a hollow laugh and turned his attention to the gunners on deck who were training the largest piece of artillery upon the shadowy bulk that was fast disappearing in the darkness.

The cannon boomed, then another, and in quick succession all the guns on the ships of Pedro Menendez belched forth fire upon the Standards of France, a nation with which his own government was at peace. The others, as if taking the cue from their commanding officer, opened upon the fugitives who replied, and the thunder of cannon rolled landward, awakening the echoes in the silent night along the banks of the River of May.

"A nice serenade for Fort Caroline," remarked Prevatt, with a laugh, to Pedro de Valdes, who stood beside him. But the Spaniard only shrugged his shoulders and walked away.

The French shots went wild and Menendez had no way of estimating the effect of his own gun fire, but it certainly had not checked the progress of the fleeing ships and he realized that it was impossible to overtake them. So he ordered the patache, which was swifter than the larger galleons, to turn about and take a message to those that had gone to the south to return at dawn to the mouth of the River of May where he and Lopez Patino would join them and they would reconnoiter the harbor to see if they could take it.

"In case none of the French ships are captured," he ex-

plained to the others who were with him on the bridge, "it will take them some time to come together. In the meantime we may be able to capture their harbor for the other French vessels will not dare to come out. Then we can land at St. Augustine and fortify the harbor there." The constant cannonading was succeeded by desultory firing which finally ceased and silence reigned over the dark waters.

Prevatt wondered at the tireless energy of the Spanish leader. All night he remained on the bridge, and although much fatigued himself, the renegade feared to seek slumber lest it might prove a detriment in the estimation of the Adelentado.

At dawn, when the first gray light floated over the billows, they could discern La Esperanza lumbering along a half-mile off the starboard bow. As the light grew stronger, far ahead could be seen two of the Frenchmen, with every sail set, every minute widening the distance between them and their pursuers.

"There is no need to go further," said Menendez. "They are at least eight leagues from their harbor and I suppose the others are equally as far. Give the signal to return," he said to San Vincenti, "I am going to sleep for an hour." And without further words he went below.

Prevatt followed and sought the quarters assigned to him by Father Mendoza. After what seemed to him to be only a few minutes he was awakened by a soldier who announced that the Adelentado commanded his presence. He hurried to the bridge where he found Menendez apparently as fresh as if he had enjoyed a full night's rest. It was ten o'clock and they were approaching the mouth of the River of May, the other four galleons being in sight and bearing in the same direction.

"Where is the deepest channel?" Menendez asked brusquely.

Prevatt had entered the harbor only once, but had heard others speak of the shifting sands at the mouth of the river

and the uncertainty of the changing bar. He did not know what effect incorrect information might have upon his fortunes, and he preferred to display ignorance rather than jeopardize his own position by miscalculations.

"It has been fourteen months since I followed the channel," he said cautiously, "at that time we found by soundings that it lay a little to the south of the center of the inlet. I have been told that it changes frequently and I would not risk my opinion as to its present location."

He watched Menendez closely in order to detect any disappointment in the Adelentado's countenance at his inability to give him the desired information. To his surprise Menendez appeared to be pleased with the answer.

"A sensible statement, Prevatt, much better than pretending to know when you do not," Menendez said, not unkindly, and then added sharply, "Show me the exact location of the Fort."

"There, just beyond that heavily wooded bluff," Prevatt replied, pointing to a dense woods that could be outlined on the south bank of the river several miles away. And as he pointed he could just make out several moving objects in the stream. "Their caravels and brigantines are getting under way," he added excitedly.

Menendez saw them, too. "They are preparing to contest our entrance," he said calmly.

As the galleons neared the mouth of the river they could distinguish five vessels, which Prevatt explained were the three caravels of Ribault, the brigantine of Laudonniere's expedition and the other purchased from Sir John Hawkins, the Englishman, all following the tortuous channel which wound through the marsh before the river emptied into the sea.

San Vicenti, standing on the bridge with them, noted moving objects on the hard beach to the south, which proved to be two companies of infantry carrying flags of France marching to the end of the bar evidently to oppose any attempt to

land.

The three Spanish galleons approaching from the South had by this time come up and all five stood off the mouth of the harbor a bare half mile. The nearest French caravel opened fire, but the shots fell far short of the Spanish ships. The French war dog was merely growling and showing his teeth, but it was a warning of what might be expected if the invaders attempted to enter the river.

Menendez signalled the other galleons to drop anchor and for the captains to come aboard for a council. "It would be a perilous undertaking for us to attempt an entrance to an unknown channel. Under fire of the enemy," he said to them when they were assembled. "Furthermore, should the other four galleons of the heretics return before we had accomplished our purpose, we would be subject to attack both in the front and rear."

All agreed with him.

"It is my opinion, therefore," he continued, "that we should at once return to St. Augustine, disembark and fortify ourselves."

Francisco de Recalde favored returning to San Domingo, but no one supported him in his contention, all the others evidently being willing to follow the judgment of their commander.

"You will take notice of your separate duties," Menendez concluded. "At daybreak in the morning, you, Juan San Vicente, and you, Lopez Patino, will land at St. Augustine with three hundred soldiers and reconnoitre the lay of the land and the places which seem the strongest for defense. Select the best of several, of which, when I join you, we will decide to be the most favorable both for quickly digging a trench and for building a fort. You, Alonzo Perez and you, Pedro de Valdes will supervise the disembarking."

Prevatt noticed that no special duty was assigned to Fran-

cisco de Recalde and wondered if his opposition to the Adelen-tado's plans was the cause. The renegade admired the cool and clever methods of Menendez in forcing these proud grandees to bow to his will, yet there was a feeling of numbness within him when he thought of the cruelties which he believed the Adelen-tado could be capable of perpetrating.

The captains departed and soon the five galleons were headed south with all sails set.

"We will breakfast now," said Menendez.

But Prevatt was not invited to sit with the others.

CHAPTER XI

GUNS IN THE NIGHT

Louis Roget wandered to his room for no better place to go. The soldier in him rebelled that he should allow the simple act of a woman's strolling alone with another man so to affect him. He told himself that he had no claim on Adele Darboux, other than that which a friend or brother might have, and that a friend or brother could not object to her receiving attentions from a gentleman and a soldier, and Charles Verdier was surely that. But in his room he threw himself into his chair and thought how bitterly he was being treated.

Charnay entered and read volumes in the disconsolate attitude of his friend. "What ho," he said cheerfully, "is the head giving you trouble, Louis?"

Roget slowly raised his eyes to the face of the Chaplain. "No," he answered wearily, "my head is all right."

"No more pains?"

"No."

"Then you must be tired from the day's exertions?"

"No, I am not tired."

"I see," said Charnay, laughing, "being a gentleman of leisure has probably bored you."

"Yes, probably that's it," said Roget rising and taking a turn across the room, as Charnay followed him with his eyes, the smile passing from his face leaving in its place a look of sweet compassion.

As Roget turned to retrace his steps, Charnay met him half way, and placed his hands affectionately upon his shoulders.

"What is it, mon ami? Something is worrying you. Can't you trust me? Perhaps I can help you."

Roget stood for an instant and gazed intently into the face of the other. For a second he thought he would confide and he opened his mouth to speak, but he knew not how to begin, and the moment was gone. He threw his head back, squared his shoulders and laughed carelessly. "There is really nothing, Charnay, I feel fine—why—why did you think there was anything the matter with me, I never felt better in my life."

Charnay looked at him hard and his face relaxed into a smile as he grasped his hand warmly. I am glad of it, Louis. I know you have nothing to worry about, in fact I—I think you are a very lucky fellow."

"Why?" asked Roget in surprise.

Charnay did not answer but turned away, shaking with silent laughter.

"What do you mean, I am a lucky fellow," Roget persisted.

"Oh, nothing," Charnay answered lightly, "I just think so, that's all." He crossed to a large chest that had been brought in since morning. "I have my beloved volumes back again," changing to a serious tone, "they were brought ashore from the brigantine today."

Roget looked longingly at him. Nothing was further from his mind than books on the reformation and the doctrine of the New Religion, which were Charnay's treasures. He would give the world, he thought, to know if there was aught in his friends words that would give him hope of Adele's love.

"Now I can resume my studies," the Chaplain continued. "How long it seems since I had them, yet it was only last week that I packed them to return to France. Ah, here is my copy of Luther's Catechisms," he said, fondling the book affectionately, "and here the exposition of the Ten Commandments, and here is Extracts from the Schmalkalden Articles. Ah, Louis, it is wonderful again to be able to read the words

of the true faith as written by the fathers."

But Louis' mind was elsewhere. He was sitting in his chair looking into space. Charnay was taking the volumes from the chest and arranging them on a shelf built upon the wall. There was a loud knock on the door.

"Come in," called Roget.

It was a soldier with a message from Ribault. Captain Roget's presence was desired in the quarters of the Admiral at once.

"Very well, I will be there directly," Louis told the soldier and proceeded to buckle on his rapier.

"I hope there is no trouble," Charnay remarked not pausing in his work.

"I don't know," Roget replied, "we can never tell. The Spaniards are near by, and where there is a Spaniard there is apt to be trouble." With this he passed from the room and closed the door behind him.

Crossing the parade, he looked about for Adele but did not see her. What he did see, however, and which especially attracted his attention, was a dense black cloud hovering in the west, its topmost rim touched by the late afternoon sun.

As he reached Ribault's quarters he found Laudonniere and Alphonse Darboux just entering and a soldier was reporting that Captain Verdier could not be located. Roget knew where he was—or at least he suspected that he was in the forest with Adele—but it was a matter too personal for him to report.

"We will proceed without him," Ribault announced as all took their seats about the table. "Gentleman, I have called you together to consider the near approach of the Spaniards. The lookout on the hill has just reported that five large galleons, flying the Standards of Spain have appeared on the southern horizon sailing northward. If they keep their course they will come in close proximity to our fleet. I do not know their destination nor their mission, I have no reason to think it is not

a friendly one. Certainly we have no quarrel with them and in fact we have been admonished not to molest them unless they molest us. But I must confess that their presence gives me concern. What action we should take, if any, is the question we are to consider."

"Surely they would not dare attack us when our countries are at peace," Laudonniere asserted with some heat.

"No, and if they do, our fleet will give a good account of itself, I warrant," Darboux said proudly.

"But there are only four of ours against five of theirs, which makes the odds in their favor," Roget contended.

"But we have five others in the river," Darboux persisted.

"In the river, yes," Roget replied, "but not at sea. If they are going to attack us, they will do so at once."

"I do not believe that they will attack us without cause," Ribault said calmly, "what I fear is some overt act on the part of our own men if the Spaniards come in too close proximity to our ships. That might precipitate hostilities."

"What right have the Spaniards to come in close proximity to our ships," Laudonniere asked earnestly.

"I admit that if they do so, it will be with designs," Ribault replied. "I am not so sure that they are overly desirous of avoiding a clash, but I do not believe they will dare to start a fight."

"Then it would seem that our chief fear is the impetuosity of our men," suggested Laudonniere.

"I would hardly say that," Ribault went on earnestly, "I have full confidence in my captains. Rotrou and the others are fully aware of the instructions of Admiral Coligny, but they are in a more or less difficult position if the Spaniards should have evil intentions."

"I would not trust them," blurted Roget, meaning the Spaniards.

"I desire your frank opinions, gentlemen," Ribault con-

tinued. "Speak freely for the sudden appearance of their fleet upon our shores may have grave significance."

Roget was the first to speak. "Since you ask for a frank opinion I will give you mine. I would prepare for war, the Spaniards have no other purpose but to drive us out. I know them."

There was a sharp report far away, followed by a low distant rumbling not unlike the fire of artillery. All looked at one another with startled countenances. There was a flash of lightning and another report like unto the first which told them that what they at first thought was a gun of the Spaniards was only thunder:

"What would you suggest?" asked Ribault breathing a sigh of relief.

"I would immediately man the caravels and brigantines," Roget replied, "hasten down the river with the tide and cross the bar while there is sufficient water. With our nine ships they would not dare attack us for the odds would be in our favor."

"I believe he is right," asserted Laudonniere, who had always great faith in the judgment of his lieutenant and which seemed to have increased since his own error in judgment of Prevatt.

"Under ordinary circumstances you would be right, Roget," Ribault said, "but"—he halted, looked around the table and stroked his beard nervously, "it has come to a pass that I must speak of matters in the strictest confidence. I trust I will not be thought disloyal to my king when I tell you that I do not trust him, on account of the Catholic influence of the Queen Mother, when it comes to matters of religion. My Lord Coligny's position at Court, as leader of the Huguenot party is an extremely difficult one. He has warned me that any mistake made by us in dealing with the Spaniards might not only result in international complications but would prove to be a

serious blow to our cause at home. Therefore; when we think of our own safety we must also think of the Huguenots in France and all that they have gained by the bloodshed in the civil wars of the past ten years. We must not let them suffer for any act of ours."

In the darkening shadows of the room, the four men searched one another's faces as if trying to find there an answer to the difficult problem.

"Should our five ships in the harbor put to sea just at this time," Ribault continued, "it might be regarded an unfriendly maneuver. Even that might be taken as an excuse for an attack by the Spaniards later, if not now."

"Then there is nothing we can do at present," Laudonniere said resignedly.

Ribault shook his head solemnly, "Nothing that I can see, but trust to God and hope for the best. Let us pray that He may so guide our destinies that the Spaniards may go their way in peace and allow us the simple privilege of living and worshipping according to our own dictates."

He fell upon his knees and the others did likewise. Raising his bearded face, he poured forth a prayer that peace might reign in New France and that it might prosper for the honor and glory of God. As he finished, there was a sharp flash of lightning with a loud peal of thunder, almost in unison, and the rain beat heavily upon the roof as the room became dark as the dusk of evening.

Roget looked out across the parade where the rain fell in sheets. "Where was Adele?" he thought anxiously. He hoped that she and Verdier had returned from the forest, but if so, why was he not at the council?" His thoughts were interrupted by the words of Ribault.

"When the rain slackens, we will dispatch the light caravel to the fleet to again warn Captain Rotrou and the others carefully to observe their instructions." ,

Roget turned upon him half defiantly, "But suppose the Spaniards should fire upon the French flag? What should Rotrou do?"

Ribault drew himself up proudly, "He should defend it as he would his own life."

"And Rotrou will do so, never fear," declared Darboux.

The meeting adjourned, but in the heavy downpour no one ventured out. They stood in the covered gallery, watching the parade become a lake, the insufficient drains being unable to carry away the flood. Then the men were driven inside by the flashes of lightning which came almost in continuous succession.

Roget took Darboux aside and told him that Adele had gone to the forest with Verdier and that he feared for her safety in the storm.

A look of concern came over Darboux's face as he looked out upon the rain and listened to the thunder. "But perhaps they have returned," he said hopefully.

"Then why is not Verdier here?" Roget retorted. "This is his place, where else could he be,"

"But even if they are in the forest, is there any real danger? Could they not find a shelter, somewhere?"

"Only beneath the trees, unless they reached the cover of one of the new houses outside the fort."

Darboux did not appear to take the matter seriously. "I am sure they are safe. Charles Verdier would not allow harm to come to Adele, besides they may have returned. I see no reason to worry," and he turned to the topic most vital to all.

But Roget was not satisfied. He could only think of Adele out there somewhere in the storm, beneath the trees perhaps drenched and bedraggled and even if she were safe it was poor solace for him since she was with another. It was he who should be there to protect her; he could build a shelter in a few moments to keep her dry. Verdier knew nothing of wood-

craft, of local conditions, of the dangers that might arise. These were his thoughts as he wandered into the gallery and paced the floor, unmindful of the downpour.

And so the rain continued until the shades of night fell, the short twilight of the semi-tropics being effaced by the lowering clouds. Roget could stand it no longer, he must know whether or not Adele had returned. Into the storm he went, wading through the ponded waters to the women's house. Cleone Murat, who was also worried at the continued absence of Adele, reported that she had not seen her since the departure of the Indians, and inquiry among others in the house met with no better results. It was certain that she had not returned to the fort.

Roget bowed his head to the storm and set out alone in search for them. They were not in any of the new structures outside the fort, so he pushed on, up the trail to the top of the bluff for he assumed that they had followed the route he had taken in the morning. Oh, for Olata, he thought, his aid would stand in good stead now. He called "Adele" but there was no answer. On through the dark forest he went stopping every few minutes to shout and holding his breath to listen. Suddenly the rain stopped as quickly as it had begun, a strong breeze drove the clouds away, the stars shone, and only the dripping leaves, the soft spongy earth and the damp smell of the woods were left to remind him of the late deluge.

He continued to call "Adele, Adele!" Finally he received an answer, faint and far away, it seemed. He was not sure it was not the hoot of an owl, but encouraged, he hurried on and continued to shout. The answering call came louder and finally he met them in a small opening amid the trees, he could see the two forms in the path.

"Is that you, Adele?" he cried.

"Yes, is that you, Louis?" she replied.

"Are you safe?" he asked breathlessly as he came to her.

"Oh, yes, I am all right," she said gaily.

"You are soaked," he exclaimed reprovingly, "why did you not hurry back when you saw the heavy clouds?"

Verdier stepped forward, "Adele has been perfectly safe, and I am quite capable of caring for her.

Louis could not see his face but there was a ring to his voice that he did not like, yet he paid no attention to the speech for his thoughts were centered on Adele. "Where were you during the storm?" he questioned sharply.

Again Verdier spoke. "I am not aware that Adele has requested the aid of Monsieur Roget."

"Oh, don't worry, Louis," Adele was quick to add, "I was perfectly safe, Charles made a bower of palmetto leaves beneath a thick vine and we were quite snug."

"Snug!" Roget retorted. The very fact that Verdier could protect her made him angry. "You are wet through and through." As he spoke he stretched forth his hand and she drew back at the quick motion, which in the dim light of the stars, startled her.

His intense interest in her welfare somehow made her very happy, yet she would have preferred that his sudden air of proprietorship had been displayed elsewhere than in the presence of Charles Verdier. There was a ring of impatience in her voice as she said, "I don't see why you should worry about me now that you see that I am safe."

Her drawing away from him rather than her tone increased his anger. "You are not all right," he blurted, "you may catch cold, you might have been struck by lightning. I am surprised that anyone would have so little judgment as to bring you out in such a storm."

Verdier stepped in front of Roget: "I resent the words and tone of Monsieur Roget," he said icily.

"Yes, Louis," Adele interposed quickly, "I am surprised at your manner. You have no right to talk so."

"But Roget did not notice her words, he was glad enough now to have some one upon whom he could vent his spleen. "What do I care for your resentment, Monsieur Verdier, if it is no stronger than your judgment, it is of small account."

"Louis," Adele gasped.

The two men stood only a pace apart each gazing at the other through the gloom. In the dim light she could only see the outline of their faces but their rigid forms told of the tenseness of their moods. For a moment there was a deathlike stillness, the chirping of crickets, a drop of water splashing upon a palmetto leaf and the cry of a night bird breaking sharply on the silence.

"Surely, Monsieur Roget has not weighed his words," Verdier said slowly.

"You may take or leave them," Roget retorted.

"Then draw, Monsieur Roget, for an insult to Charles Verdier can only be wiped out in blood."

The rapiers flashed. Adele could see them in the starlight as each stood at guard. For an instant she remained transfixed, it seemed that the blood in her arteries ceased to flow. Then she emitted a piercing scream, "Mon Dieu, no, you shall not fight," and she sprang between them. It was Verdier's sword that grazed her arm for it was he she tried to hold to prevent his hurting Louis.

Roget saw the outline of the white figure as he thought in the arms of the other man. It was Verdier that she was trying to shield and a feeling of utter wretchedness came over him—overpowering his anger and leaving him abashed that he had played the part of the fool.

Adele still clung to Verdier's arm so that he was powerless to use his sword. Roget stepped back and laughed cynically. "I beg a thousand pardons, Monsieur Verdier, I was mistaken. I retract my unseemly words." He sheathed his sword. "And I also ask your pardon, Mademoiselle, for my

intrusion. Monsieur Verdier, I am sure you can find your way to the fort, I will bid you both good night." And he turned and disappeared in the darkness leaving Adele and Verdier gazing in astonishment after him.

Near the fort he met Alphonse Darboux and his brother Ernest at the head of a searching party with torches, who were just separating in groups to cover the surrounding country. He recognized Alphonse in the light before he reached him.

They heard his approaching footsteps. "Who is that?" some one called out.

"It is I, Roget."

"Ah, Louis, have you found them?" Alphonse said advancing eagerly.

"Oh, yes," Roget responded lightly, "they are quite all right, there is nothing to fear. Verdier took good care of her in the storm and they will be on presently."

"But where are they now?" inquired Ernest.

"Back there," Roget replied, motioning over his shoulder.

"Why did you leave them?" Alphonse asked with concern. The light of his torch fell full on Roget's face.

"I thought you might be worried and I came ahead to tell you that they were safe." Roget answered without the quiver of an eyelid.

"They are coming now," cried Ernest joyfully as voices were heard up the trail, and he rushed to meet them.

Roget hardly knew what to do. To proceed to the fort alone would require an explanation to Alphonse who was waiting expectantly. But there was surely no reason to stultify himself further, he thought. He had fought it all out with himself on his return through the woods; he had no claim on Adele and he could not blame Verdier for loving her; he might just as well assume an attitude that he could maintain. "We will go to meet them," he said as he followed Ernest with Alphonse by his side.

Under the light of the torch, Adele looked quite bedraggled, her wet dress clung to her figure while damp strands of her hair straggled from beneath her drenched bonnet. A handkerchief tied about her arm showed spots of red.

"What is this?" asked Alphonse excitedly catching her arm and examining the blood stains.

"Oh, nothing," she answered cheerfully, "just a scratch from a thorn." And she shot an appealing glance at Roget who stood on the outer circle of the light.

"Must have been a large thorn," her brother observed, evidently satisfied, however, as he said nonchalantly, "Charney will fix that up."

"It isn't worth the bother," she persisted nervously, as the party moved down the trail. In short, snatchy sentences she gave an account of how the storm had suddenly overtaken them and how they had fared, making light of it all, and mentioning nothing of the quarrel between the two men. Neither Roget nor Verdier spoke.

It was almost midnight as they entered the fort and Roget wished that he could get away and be alone. He did not desire to have further words with Verdier for one thing. They stopped in the center of the fort preparatory to saying good night, when from the east there came a dull report and a low rumbling as the echoes reverberated in the hollows. Their recent experiences made all look up expecting to see the lowering clouds again, but it was not thunder from the heavens this time. There was another report, then another and the air was filled with the sound of cannonading.

"The Spaniards!" Darboux exclaimed. "They have attacked the fleet."

There was commotion in the fort, excited voices calling, lights appeared and people poured into the parade. In the stillness of the night and the lightness of the atmosphere, the sounds seemed to come from just beyond the bluff.

"I will take Adele to her room," Alphonse Darboux said, "then I will meet you at the Admiral's quarters. He will want us." Taking his sister's arm, he hurried across the parade, leaving Roget and Verdier side by side.

But the menace of a greater danger made the two men forget their petty differences. Without a word, they went together to the quarters of Admiral Ribault.

CHAPTER XII

THE SPANIARDS

Tuesday night, September 4, 1565, was one of tense anxiety in Fort Caroline. The distant rumbling of cannon gradually grew fainter, but it was noticeable that the sounds came from two directions, the northeast and southwest, which told the experienced ones that the fleets had divided. Finally the booming died away entirely and silence again reigned in the outer world, but not at the fort. There all was life and activity. It was a seething mass of flickering lights, in the parade, on the ramparts, at the dock and aboard the ships in the river—like fireflies the torches moved hither and thither as the men worked with feverish haste to prepare to meet the enemy that had fired upon the flag of France.

Ribault had given his orders quickly. Into council he and his captains assembled at once, Darboux and Laudonniere arriving almost as soon as Roget and Verdier had reached his quarters. The peaceful Huguenot had become the lion, driven to bay and ready to fight. He did not know whether the first shot had been fired by Rotrou or the enemy—for the caravel had not been able to take the message down the river on account of the storm and the quick coming of darkness—but it mattered not now, the die was cast, it was war between the French and Spaniards.

Upon the first arrival of the fleet from France, all the guns on the caravels had been transferred to the fort to take the place of the guns sold to Sir John Hawkins the Englishman. These must be dismantled—all the work of the previous days

undone—and the armament placed again on board the ships to go to the aid of the French fleet. And this must be accomplished as quickly as possible, for though they could not risk a journey down the river in the darkness for fear of going aground, as soon as there was sufficient light Ribault hoped to be ready to get underway.

They were stern visaged men who gathered around the table to formulate plans for the stupendous task confronting them. The first consideration was the success of the fleet, but Laudonniere insisted that it was unwise to leave the fort defenseless in case the Spaniards should attempt a landing. Here he and Ribault disagreed. The Admiral contended that everything depended upon the battle at sea, its results spelled salvation or ruin for New France; Laudonniere believed that in the fortifications of Fort Caroline lay success or failure. The stripping of all the guns from the ramparts of the fort—excepting the two that Hawkins had left—seemed to him to be too great a gamble when the lives of the women and children were at stake. But his appeal for the women and children had no effect on Ribault, for he would destroy the Spaniards before they had chance to land.

As seemed to be inevitable in all their parleys Roget agreed with Laudonniere in his contentions and Darboux stood with Ribault. Verdiere had not spoken. Roget had expected the same defiant attitude which he had displayed toward him during the other conferences, but a change seemed to have come over the man, there was a melancholy air about him, a spirit of depression not in keeping, as Roget thought, with the manner of one who had gained so great a love as Adele's. It was necessary for Ribault to ask him for his opinion.

"The issues are too grave for me to decide," he answered solemnly, "to stake all on the cast of a die and leave the fort defenseless would seem too great a hazard. Yet not to concentrate our strength against the enemy's fleet may defeat the

very purposes we would accomplish."

Ribault suggested a compromise. "We will leave two companies of infantry, one-half arquebusiers and one-half pikemen. These will advance to the point of land at the mouth of the river. We will arm the brigantines and let them remain in the river just inside the bar. In this way the enemy will be subject to a double fire should they attempt a landing."

This seemed to be the best Laudonniere could obtain for his defenses, so he agreed and all departed for their separate duties. In spite of all their efforts, at daylight they had only been able to dismantle the guns and bring them to the bank of the river, they were to be placed on board the ships. As the sun rose the lookout on the hill reported that not a sail was in sight, both fleets had completely disappeared as if sunk beneath the waves. It was all a matter of conjecture as to the result of the night battle at sea, but the gruesome thought was uppermost that had the French fleet been victorious it would be at the outer harbor. That it had saved itself by flight was the only ray of hope. Anyway it was not a time for conjecture, it was a time to act, to prepare for whatever emergency might arise during the day and all believed it would be a fateful one for New France.

Roget and Lieutenant Jaques Baillot, who had succeeded Prevatt, were placed in command of the two companies of infantry. They were to proceed by land to the hard beach and march north to a point as near to the mouth of the river as possible. Laudonniere was to be left in the fort with a bare half company of infantry. Ribault was to have command of the Dolphin, the largest of the caravels, and Darboux and Verdier the other two. The two brigantines, only partially armed and half manned, were placed in charge of two ensigns.

Roget was just leaving his room to join his company, which was forming in the parade, when Charnay met him.

"I have bad news for you, Louis," he said grimly, "Adele

is quite ill."

"Adele ill?" Roget gasped. For the instant he forgot Verdier and all else but the woman he loved. "What is it? What is the trouble? Is it anything serious?" His questions came in jerks.

"She has a high fever."

"Exposure to the storm." Roget gritted his teeth, he knew Verdier couldn't protect her.

Charnay interrupted his thoughts. "No, I don't think it is so much that, it is not a cold, it is a festering wound.

"Oh, from the scratch of the thorn."

"It was not a thorn, Louis, it is a wound from a knife or a sword, a gash on the forearm. But she will tell me nothing and becomes hysterical when I question her."

"A wound from a sword," Roget repeated wonderingly. He recalled the scene of Adele's springing between him and Verdier, she must have received the cut then, certainly not from his rapier for it had come in contact with nothing but the steel of his adversary. It must have been Verdier's. A strange fate, he thought, to spill the blood of one who loved him.

Charnay was watching Roget intently. "Do you happen to know aught about this wound, Louis?"

Roget hesitated. If Adele did not wish to mention the affair what right had he. It was a matter for her and Verdier to explain. "Why should I know anything about it?" he asked evasively. "I did not go into the forest with her. It was Verdier, ask him."

"I have asked him and he refused to answer."

"I did not know that she was wounded until we joined Alphonse," Roget said truthfully, "and then she herself said that it was the scratch of a thorn."

"So she still contends, but I do not believe a thorn could make such a wound, if so I would like to know what kind of a thorn it was."

Roget was undecided whether he should tell more.

"There is some mystery here that I cannot fathom," Charnay continued in serious tone, "it is not curiosity that prompts me, but as a physician that I ask. It is best that I should know the truth, the girl's life may depend upon it. I thought surely you would be willing to tell, if you knew."

This decided Roget. If Adele's life was at stake, nothing else counted even though she belonged to another. "Probably I have no right to speak, Charnay, since Adele and Verdier have refused, but if what I can tell you will aid in her recovery, then I will not keep silent. All I ask you is to hold my words in confidence."

"You have my promise."

Roget told the story of the meeting in the forest, of the quarrel and Adele's intervention. "I do not see how she could have been wounded," he concluded, "except from Verdier's sword. I am sure it was not mine or I would have felt the contact."

"Just as I thought, a sword wound," Charnay said, "and if it had been attended to at once there would, in all probability, have been no complications. But she carelessly let it go until this morning and now the trouble is serious. I thank you, Louis, your information may be of value.

"Then you think it serious."

"Such cases are always serious."

Roget grasped his friend's hand. "Watch over her Charnay, don't let her die." His voice was husky, "I must go now, my men are waiting." And he hurried away.

When he reached the parade where the two companies were in line, Jacques Baillot told him that news had just been received from the lookout that two ships had appeared on the horizon to the northeast, but whether they were French or Spanish he could not tell; also that the last guns were being taken aboard the ships and that they would be underway with-

in the hour. Roget knew that they should be on the march at once in order to be at their destination before the arrival of the caravels at the mouth of the river. The companies passed through the east portal, up the hill and along the trail through the woods.

When Roget, at the head of his column came to the edge of the slope where the trail led down through the saw palmettoes toward the beach, he halted the men to rest for a moment in the shade, for the rapid march had worried those unaccustomed to the heat. As he looked out to sea he discovered that not only were two ships approaching from the northeast, but there were three others coming from the south. They were at least two leagues away, but he could see that their prows were pointed toward the mouth of the River May and that they were not galleons of the French fleet. There was no time to lose, so he again urged his men forward.

By the time they reached the beach the galleons were sufficiently near for him to distinguish the Standards of Spain flying from the masts. The caravels and brigantines of Ribault could not be seen, if they were underway they had not yet passed the bluff.

It was half tide and there remained enough of the hard beach to allow a splendid road for marching. The newcomers from France were astonished at the hardness of the sand upon which their feet made no impression. When they reached the point near the inlet, they could see across the marsh the French caravels hastening down the river, while out to sea the five Spanish Galleons were coming to a point nearly opposite them, but no where in sight were the vessels of the French fleet. Where was Rotrou?

When near the mouth of the river the Dolphin opened fire upon the Spaniards a half mile off shore, far out of range, Roget thought how useless was the waste of ammunition, but it had evidently had the effect of making the Spaniards change

their minds for they dropped anchor. The ships of Ribault did likewise, he did not care to risk a battle at sea with three caravels against five galleons. For an hour the French waited and watched the enemy expectantly. They could see the skiffs passing from one vessel to another and the exchange of signals and suddenly the enemy weighed anchor and proceeded towards the south.

Whether this was a ruse the French did not know, but at high tide Ribault sailed boldly across the bar as the Spanish ships became mere specks upon the southern horizon. Other specks, however, appeared within the hour and by the middle of the afternoon all four of the French fleet, apparently in perfect condition, anchored off the mouth of the River of May. The Dolphin met them and Ribault evidently received such information as he desired for soon he recrossed the bar and signaled Roget to return to the fort. It had been a good day's work, the show of strength had undoubtedly prevented the landing of the enemy and saved Fort Caroline from attack.

As Roget and his men were marching through the eastern gate the sun was just setting—one of those glorious sunsets, when the sun-god seems to sit upon his clouded throne sending his rays of light like messengers to every part of the heavens. These rays of light brought out in bold relief tiny specks of clouds that dotted the vaulted dome changing the azure into a mottled grey. Olata had told Roget that such a sky was a sure presage of unsettled weather, that the Storm King was marshalling his forces to turn the fury of his tempests upon the world.

The Dolphin, with Ribault, Darboux and Verdier on board, had returned, also the brigantines, but the other two caravels had been left at the mouth of the river to aid the fleet if needed. The men were eager for news of the happenings on the fleet during the previous night, they knew that those on board the Dolphin had the story, so as soon as the ranks were

broken they hurried to hear it. Roget was as eager as the rest, but there was other news he desired most of all. Throughout the day his thoughts were constantly with Adele and in the sick room, where he knew Charnay was fighting to save the life of one he loved, yes, one he loved, although he knew she was not for him.

He looked longingly at the women's house, wishing that he might there inquire, but he dare not—it was not his right—he must find Charnay and learn from him. So he went to his own room but found it empty. Charnay was evidently with Adele now. He returned to the parade where he met Verdier just returning from the dock.

“Have you heard?” Roget asked eagerly.

“No, have you?” It was the first words they had spoken since the quarrel, but now there was nought of animosity in the bearing of either.

“Not since morning,” Roget replied. “Charnay said then that she was dangerously ill.”

Verdier's haggard face was turned appealingly to Roget, “Let us pray to God that she may be spared.”

“Amen,” Roget breathed fervently.

Verdier started to move away, “I must report to the Admiral, he is waiting for me,” he said. “Will you tell me if you hear, please”?

“I will.” Roget watched him as he hurried off, could Verdier's suffering be as great as his own?

Back to his room he went, there to await alone, it was better than wandering about the parade. And soon Charnay came, his face brightening when he saw Roget, who was at the door to open it when he heard the familiar footsteps.

“What news,” asked Roget breathlessly.

“Better.”

“Thank God.”

“Yes, blessed be His name, I think the crisis is passed. She

has been delirious most of the day—and Louis,” Charnay paused, “she called for you continually.”

“For me?”

“Yes, there seemed to be some great worry on her mind, some misunderstanding, she was begging you to listen to her, not to go away.”

“Yes, I know,” Roget said sadly, “poor child, in the goodness of her heart she does not wish to hurt me.”

“Of course she would not hurt you, Louis.”

Roget was picturing Adele lying there in the sick room alone. “Who is with her now?” he asked.

“Cleone Murat. She is a good nurse.”

“I wish I could help,” Roger said wistfully.”

“There is nothing you can do except to keep to the story of the thorn. She begs that and especially to Alphonse and Ernest. I have promised her.”

“Did she tell you . . .?”

“No, she has told me nothing, but keeps repeating the thorn story. She made me promise to bear her out in that.”

“Alphonse and Ernest have been on shipboard all day. Have they heard of her illness?” Roget asked.

“No,” Charnay replied, “but I am going to find them now. They can’t see her, however, for I want her to be very quiet tonight. Tomorrow, if she continues to improve they may come.”

“And I must go and tell Verdier, I promised him.”

“Yes, tell Verdier, I think she would like for him to know, and if you see her brothers tell them also.” Charnay added as Roget left the room.

He went to Ribault’s quarters where he believed he would find Verdier. Not only was he with the Admiral, but Alphonse Darboux was there also. Roget knew that news of Adele would be interesting to all, so he told them of her illness, being careful to lay stress upon the cause as agreed with

Charnay, repeating the physician's story of her present condition and his injunction that she must have no visitors. Alphonse was greatly concerned and went immediately to find the physician and question him more particularly.

Roget remained to hear the story of the fleet, which Ribault told as Rotrou had told him, how the French had refrained from any act which might be regarded unfriendly, even allowing the Spaniards to come within a ship's length of them without a word and then of the insults of Pedro Menendez and his threat to hang all those who were not Catholics. Rotrou had thought it best not to risk a fight at close quarters and had easily slipped away from the cumbersome Spanish galleons and had not fired a shot until they had opened on him.

"Now it is war," Roget said simply when Ribault had finished.

"Yes, war," the Admiral replied, "I am sure my Lord Coligny would think the cause sufficient now."

"Where do you think the Spaniards have gone"?

"It is my own opinion that they have returned to the River of Dolphins, where they first landed. In the morning Rotrou will go south along the coast with two ships to reconnoitre. We have not heard the last of them I am sure."

"Yes, it is only a matter of time when they will attack us, they will not let us remain in peace," Roget said bitterly.

"It is not my intention to wait for them to attack us," Ribault observed grimly. "As soon as I am sure of their location I am going to take the offensive."

Roget's face brightened. "Ah, that is good news, and I hope that I may be with you when you meet them."

"I would like to have you with me, Roget, but I fear that it cannot be, Laudonniere will need you here."

"Yes, perhaps so, but it has always been my desire to meet the Spaniards in battle."

"You may have the opportunity here at Caroline if our efforts are unsuccessful."

"Yes, that is true, too."

"But our efforts will not be unsuccessful," Ribault said solemnly, "the God of battles is with us and we will make the proud Don regret his insult to the French flag."

Verdier was a silent listener to the conversation, when they departed he went with Roget along the covered gallery that led to his own room. As they parted at his door he extended his hand cordially. "I want to tell you, Roget, that any ill feeling I have had is gone, I wish you all happiness." And he entered his room before Roget could speak.

Roget turned away smiling cynically. What happiness could there be for him without Adele, he thought.

It was late before Charnay entered his room that night. Roget had retired but was awake—the fatigue of the body would not succumb to the cares of the mind. He eagerly asked for news of Adele and was told that she was resting well and should be much improved in the morning. The news was evidently the needed panacea, for straightway he fell into a dreamless slumber.

In the morning he was quite refreshed and after breakfast waited for a report from Charnay.

"You may see her for a few moments," he was told when the physician had returned from the sick room.

This was more than Roget had hoped for and he feared that Charnay through friendship for him might be guilty of imposing his presence where it was not desired.

"You are sure she would care to see me," he said guardedly.

"Care to see you," Charnay exclaimed impatiently, "she has asked especially for you."

"Then, of course, I will go," Roget replied. She had evidently determined that nothing in her relations with Verdier

should affect their friendship which had existed since her childhood. He was glad, for if he could be no more he would always like to be regarded a big brother by Adele. These were his thoughts as he crossed to the women's house. He had suggested to Charnay that he come with him, but his friend had looked at him with a peculiar gleam in his eye, "you don't need me," he had said, "go alone."

In answer to his light tap on the door, the voice of Cleone Murat bade him enter. Adele lay upon her couch, her luxuriant hair streaming over the pillow made a setting in which her pale face appeared even more pallid by contrast. Her countenance brightened with a smile when she recognized him. He advanced to her bedside and his heart ached as he beheld her lying there so wan and helpless. He raised her hand to his lips.

"I am glad you came, Louis," she said faintly.

Cleone brought a chair and placed it for him by the bed.

"How do you feel, Adele?" he asked gently.

"I am better, thank you, but I was very ill yesterday."

"So Charnay told me, but he says you'll be all right now."

"I hope so," she said, smiling into his face.

Cleone tipped softly across the room, opened the door noiselessly and went out. So quiet was she that Roget did not know she had gone. His eyes were riveted upon the face before him, his heart glowed under the inspiration of Adele's presence.

"Are you angry with me, Louis?" she asked finally.

"Angry with you!" he exclaimed in astonishment; "how could I be?"

"I didn't know, I thought you might be."

"I could never be angry with you, Adele."

"Nor I with you, Louis."

He spoke cheerfully of her recovery, how within a few days she would be able to be out and to enjoy the sunshine and

air, but nothing did he say of the coming of the Spaniards or of the dangers that menaced them.

But she came back again to the subject nearest her heart. "I hope I did not offend you the other night, Louis."

"No, you did not offend me, it was I who offended, I fear."

"No. Louis, I could not really blame you—I—." Tears swelled into her eyes and she sobbed.

"There, there," he said compassionately, stroking her hands, "I know . . ."

She interrupted him. "No, you don't know," she said impatiently, "that's the trouble, you don't know."

"Oh, yes I do, I understand," he persisted soothingly, "don't cry, we cannot have everything as we wish, it is your happiness I desire most, Adele."

She buried her head in her pillow and sobbed more violently, he saw her form tremble. Becoming alarmed, he turned for Cleone and found that she was not in the room. He leaned over the bed and tried to comfort Adele, but his words seem to have no effect. He rushed to the door, opened it and called, "Cleone." She was just outside and came immediately.

"What is it?" she asked in alarm.

"Adele, I fear she is worse."

But Adele had become calm again. "I am all right now, just a little spell," she said smiling through her tears.

Cleone looked from her to Roget quizzically. "I think Captain Roget has remained long enough this time," she said blandly.

"Yes, I think I have," he agreed innocently, "in fact, I think Adele is too nervous yet to receive visitors. He crossed to her bed and took her hand, "you must be quiet, my child, and when you are better I will come to see you again—if you don't mind."

"Yes, please do, Louis."

When he reached the parade he turned toward the west gate.

"I will get her some wild flowers," he said to himself, "they are scarce at this season of the year, but I will find some, anyway."

CHAPTER XIII

RIBAUT SAILS AWAY

It was a day of waiting—expectant, tense, nerve-racking—for upon the report of Rotrou who had gone south to reconnoitre would depend the future action of the French Colony. Would it be able to keep its peaceful tenor as before the Spaniards came or would it be war, to escape which, so many of its members had left their beloved France. Ribault had said that he would attack the enemy if they had disembarked at the River of Dolphins. Laudonniere still maintained that the risk was too great to chance a battle and that Fort Caroline should not be left unprotected.

During the day, Roget heard several times from Adele through Charnay. She was improving rapidly, he was told, but the physician did not invite him to see her again. Cleone had told all she knew and Charnay had decided that as a minister in the sick room Roget was not a success. Nor did Roget request the privilege of another visit believing that he was best serving her interests by keeping away, but in the afternoon he again went to the woods and gathered such wild flowers as he could find and sent them to her room.

It was nearly sunset when Roget was notified that Olata was waiting to see him.

"Has my white brother been ill?" were the first words of the Indian as he carefully studied Roget's face.

"No," the white man replied in surprise, "why does Olata ask?"

"The spirit of my mother came to me today. Her message

was of my white brother, Olata feared for him."

"There is nothing," Roget said lightly.

"The spirit of my mother does not send a message unless there is a reason," the Indian contended doggedly.

"Of course the Spaniards, we have all been concerned about them. You knew of the fight."

"Yes, our men heard the big guns on the water, they came and told Satouriana, but that was not the message, it was of you, or some one you love, or she would not have spoken."

"Oh yes," Roget said quickly, "I know now, it was Adele. Your white sister has been quite ill."

"Then it is she," the Indian said as if satisfied. "Olata will send his juavas to cure his white sister."

"No, Olata, that is not necessary. She is better now, in fact, she is out of danger. But I thank you just the same and your white sister will be very grateful."

The Indian changed the subject as if entirely dismissing Adele's illness from his mind. "The enemies of my white brother and of the great white father who comes from the rising sun, many of them are at Selooe."

Roget caught Olata's arm. "How do you know that?" he asked excitedly.

"Tolita, the runner, came to Satouriana just as I was coming to see my white brother."

"When did they land?"

"They began to come when the first light was upon the waters?"

"This morning?"

"Yes."

"I must notify Admiral Ribault at once," Roget said anxiously. "Come with me, Olata, we will go to him."

At the Admiral's quarters they found Darboux with Ribault. Roget told them what Olata had said and acting as interpreter obtained further details. At daylight the Spaniards had begun

to disembark and to dig trenches. Menendez, whom Olata called their cacique, had ordered Utina, the sagamore, to vacate the council house of the village and had appropriated it for his own headquarters. He had also dispossessed the Indians of their huts and tepees and forced them into the woods but had given them many presents in return. Ribault wanted to know what his friend Satouriana thought of such treatment. Roget interpreted Olata's answer to him.

"Satouriana, mighty cacique of the Tumucuars, has not yet spoken to Ucita, his sagamore. Until he does, Olata can not say, but if the white men have treated Ucita and his people unfairly, it will be war between the Tumucuars and the newcomers."

"It would be greatly to our advantage if there should be war between them," Roget added.

"Yes, but the crafty Spaniard may have satisfied Ucita and even made him an ally," Ribault said bitterly. "If we only had an offensive and defensive treaty with Tumucuars, as I wanted, they would be compelled to go to war with us against the Spaniards."

Darboux noted Roget's chagrin at the remark of the Commander in Chief and knew the reason, for Roget had acknowledged to him the mistake he had made in opposing the form of treaty which Ribault desired with the Indians and had expressed his disappointment at the turn of events. So he hastened to come to the aid of his friend.

"I do not believe there will be any trouble on that score, Admiral," he argued, "I am sure that Louis, through his friendship for Olata and Satouriana can succeed in arousing the Indians against the Spaniards. This act of Menendez will give him an excellent excuse."

The suggestion opened visions of great possibilities in the mind of Ribault. His countenance brightened. "If you can do so, Roget, it will mean certain victory for us. What say you?"

"I will try," Roget answered unhesitatingly.

"You can go to them tomorrow," Ribault continued. "Have Olata remain here tonight and accompany you to the Indian village. Have Satouriana call his sagamores together, you can address them, telling them of our friendship, of the kindly acts of the French in contrast with the brutal methods of the Spaniards. You know what to say and how to say it. Speaking to them in their own tongue, you should be able to arouse them so thoroughly as to make them advance at once. In the meantime I will have attacked the Spanish fleet and destroyed it. I will disembark and combine with Satouriana in a land attack. It will mean the complete annihilation of the enemy and their riddance from New France forever. Tell Satouriana if he will help in the destruction of the Spaniards, the great white father who comes from the rising sun gives his solemn promise to Satouriana that he will join with him in the destruction of his enemies the Themogoans."

In his enthusiasm, Ribault had risen from his seat, his eyes flashed, his high-wrought passion flamed and vehement gestures accompanied his words. Olata stood with folded arms and his black, snappy eyes, as they followed curiously every movement of the bearded chieftain, alone gave evidence of his surprise at the manner of one usually so composed.

Roget turned to the young savage and spoke to him earnestly. "If Olata will remain with me tonight, I will go with him tomorrow to Saturiba to visit him and his father, Satouriana, the mighty chief of the Tumucuanes."

The Indian's face brightened and the muscles contracted almost into a smile. "Olata is glad that his white brother will come with him to Saturiba. Olata can not remain with his white brother tonight, but he will come again when the sun has risen."

"It is arranged," Roget said turning again to Ribault. "Olata will go to his village tonight but he will return in the morning."

I will ask him to acquaint Satouriana of my coming and if possible to have his sagamores there for a pow wow. I will do my best to arouse them against the Spaniards." He was glad of an opportunity to retrieve the mistake he had made in the previous negotiations with the Indians.

Ribault's plans were to await the report of Rotrou and if it agreed with the information brought by Olata he would immediately proceed against the enemy.

Roget and Olata went to the former's room where the white man carefully explained to the Indian that he wished him to use his influence with his father to have him call his sagamores together at the earliest possible moment on a matter of great importance, though he refrained from telling the nature of the business, preferring to inform the old chief and the others in his own way. Olata readily agreed.

Roget had not expected Olata to remain in the fort at night; he had often invited him, but had always met with a polite refusal, the Indian claiming that he could not sleep in the close quarters of the white man. He had always spent his nights in the forest or returned to his own village three leagues away. So Roget accompanied him to the east gate and a little way up the hill.

As they were about to part, the Indian looked up into the sky, "There will be a storm, the sky, the earth, the sounds in the woods all tell of its coming. It may last many days, but it is the season the Great Spirit always sends them," and he again turned to Roget, "I will see my white brother when the sun comes again," and he started up the trail in a swinging trot.

Before Roget reached the gate of the fort on his return, he was overtaken by a courier from the lookout who told him that the two ships that had gone south in the morning were returning. Later in the evening Rotrou arrived and Ribault called his captains into council to hear the report and mature their plans. Rotrou's statements bore out those of Olata, the

Spaniards had disembarked at the mouth of the River of Dolphins and in addition to the five galleons which had attacked the French fleet there were now six and all but one were anchored within the harbor. The other and largest, evidently of too great draught to cross the bar, had anchored on the outside. Rotrou announced that he could easily have attacked and destroyed this one, but his strict orders had been not to risk a battle unless compelled to do so.

Ribault announced his intentions to immediately go against them with all the forces at his command. When he expressed his determination to take most of the able bodied men of the original colony from the fort Laudonniere strenuously objected, pointing out that it was a season when violent storms could be expected and if the expedition failed the fort would be at the mercy of the Spaniards. The Admiral replied that his ships were sturdy and could ride the storms and that he put his trust in God as for that. He further explained to him that Roget would arouse the Tumucians and he would have in them allies for defense against a land attack.

Laudonniere's arguments could not overcome the dogged determination of the brave Admiral to destroy the Spanish fleet. Not only did he intend to take many of Laudonniere's best men, but a large portion of his supplies as well. Rotrou was a strong adherent of Ribault's, he claimed that it would be easy to destroy the enemy's large galleon anchored on the outside before the others could come to its aid, and as a large part of the armament of those within the harbor had probably been taken ashore they would be easy victims. Both Darboux and Verdier thought the argument sound and Roget had such hopes of arousing the Tumucians that his objections were feeble.

It was decided that they should sail at high tide the next day. The morning would be spent in loading the supplies on the caravels—the brigantines would remain in the river but

the guns would be taken off. Rotrou would return to the fleet and have all in readiness there, the armada would proceed south in the late afternoon and be ready to fall upon the enemy on the day following. Roget's sanguine attitude and his rosy diliation of the fruits of their victory inspired the confidence of all except Laudonniere whose pessimism was attributed to the constant recurrence of the fever to which he was subject.

No great undertaking such as this would be proper without invoking Divine blessings upon it and Ribault ordered that all should gather in the parade in the early morning where services would be held by Charnay, the Chaplain. The chapel would be too small to contain so large a gathering.

Even before the hour of the service Olata had arrived announcing that everything that had been asked had been done. Satouriana had called his sagamores to meet him the following day. Roget explained that it would be late in the day before he would be able to leave and suggested that the Indian go to the forest and gather the daily offering of flowers for Adele which he would not have time to get himself. These would be the last for her during her illness for Charnay had reported that she would be able to be out before he returned from his trip to the Indians.

The fort was still in the shadow of the bluff when the bugle called the assemblage. All who were able to come gathered in the vacant space in the parade—silent, expectant, knowing full well that matters of great import were pending—but save a selected few, none realized the full significance of the meeting. Ribault announced the sailing of the fleet in the early afternoon, that the expedition would be against the Spaniards to drive the hated enemies from the confines of New France, Verdier read the long list of those who would go, and Charnay held a simple service, praying to God to bring victory to their arms.

The announcement of the departure of the fleet was received

with varied emotions by the members of the colony, some were pleased at the prospect of battle, others, especially those who would leave their families, viewed the outlook despondently. There was consternation among the women whose husbands would leave them, they did not come to New France to be deserted so quickly. They could be seen clinging to their men as if in a last embrace or standing apart in earnest conversation, unmindful of the surroundings, thinking only of what the future might have in store. All in all, however, it was a crew inured to sorrow and suffering, veterans of years of civil and religious strife, instilled with fervor for their faith men and women who looked to the future with an abiding hope.

Soon the fort presented a scene of activity all bending their efforts to the task before them and there was a repetition of the busy life that marked the night and day when the Spaniards first came.

At noon, as the time drew near for his departure, Alphonse Darboux came to Roget who was in his room at the time, for he was making his final arrangements for his departure with Olata.

"I wish to speak to you, Louis, on a matter of great importance to me," he said as he entered. "I have a favor to ask."

"Whatever I can do for you, Alphonse, you know that I will gladly do," was Roget's ready response.

"It is about Adele."

Roget was placing a chair for Darboux at the words of his friend he halted and uttered an exclamation of surprise. "I am leaving her here alone, as you know," Darboux continued.

"Yes."

"You are the nearest and dearest to us all. You will be here when Ernest and I are gone. I would ask that you look after her just as if she were your own sister."

Roget advanced and grasped Darboux hand. "I promise you I will, Alphonse."

"Of course, you know, Louis, after all is said, there are chances of my not returning."

"Oh no, Alphonse, you will be back in a few days!" Roget said cheerfully.

"Perhaps, yes, let us hope so, but one can never tell. You are too experienced a soldier not to know that in war everything is uncertain."

"Yes, I know, but in this case it is different. You'll be back shortly. Come, I have a bottle of wine, we will drink to the success of the expedition and your early return."

Darboux knew that Roget's levity was forced, but played his part and they clinked their glasses each toasting success to the other.

"And to Adele!" said Roget.

"To Adele!" chimed Darboux.

"Have you bidden her adieu?" Roget asked.

"Not yet, but I am going to do so now. We sail within an hour. I wanted to see you first. I wished to tell her what you have said, so that she may know she can always come to you just as she would have come to me."

"Tell her that I, too, am leaving within the hour to go with Olata among the Indians, but that I will return within two days and that I will see her then."

"Adieu, Louis."

"God speed you, Alphonse."

And thus they parted.

Roget went for a final conference with Ribault and Laudonniere. They carefully reviewed the plans for the attack of the Indians, calculating the days when it could be expected, provided Roget was successful. Laudonniere would have Jacques Baillot as his aid and there was really little for them to do but to await the return of the victors. Roget bade Ribault farewell wishing him success and the older man bestowed his blessings upon the younger. In the parade he met Charnay, and gave

to him the flowers which Olata had gathered in the morning as a token to Adele from him and the Indian. He told his physician of the parting words of Alphonse Darboux, entrusting Adele to Charnay's care until he returned. As he and Olata passed through the east gate, the caravels were just getting under way, they could hear the farewell shouts of those who were left behind.

Saturiba, the village where Satouriana resided lay three leagues to the South, but the trail was the same as that which led to the beach except that after passing through the forest and reaching the edge of the slope where the ocean first came to view, the trail to the village turned abruptly to the right. Following this for several miles they came to a small river where Olata had left his canoe. The remainder of the journey was made by water.

When Roget and Olata reached the point where the ocean came into view, the caravels were just crossing the bar of the inlet at the mouth of the river. The two men stood and watched them join the fleet and saw Ribault board his flagship. The Armada then proceeded southward, an imposing sight to the watchers, one of whom knew that on those seven ships lay all the hopes and ambitions of New France.

Olata was the first to speak. He pointed to a bank of white clouds in the north, "Before another sun has set a storm will come, the winds will blow and the sea will be angry. Olata hopes that the ships of the Great White Father who comes from the rising sun will ride the waves until the storm is over."

CHAPTER XIV

THE STORM

The light canoe glided swiftly through the placid waters of the bayou propelled by the strokes of the Indian's sinewy arms. Roget enjoyed the comfort of a seat after his long walk and leaned back against his light pack dreamily watching the fish sporting in the water or an alligator lazily floating on the surface. A light breeze softened the warmth of the afternoon into a delightful balminess and but for the weighty problems that lay upon his mind he would have enjoyed the visit to the Indian village as a pleasant vacation, yet he knew that upon his efforts might depend the future of the French colony and he silently prayed that he might be successful in his undertaking.

As they drew near to their destination the bayou narrowed into a creek and the marshy land gave way to high banks heavily wooded. The slanting rays of the sun cutting through the moss covered branches of live oak fell upon undergrowth of magnolia and bay covering their glistening leaves with a sheen of emerald. Rounding a bend, they came suddenly to the landing at Saturiba and Olata emitted a loud yell which was answered by shouts from within the palisade. By the time the nose of the canoe touched the bank two young Indians with willing hands pulled it ashore.

The village stood back on the west bank several hundred feet from the stream in a grove of live oak and cabbage palmetto. Completely surrounding it was a wall of palmetto posts from ten to twelve feet high inside of which grew a

hedge of giant and dwarf bamboo mingled, the former waving its grass like branches above the top of the wall, the latter forming a mass of green beneath very pleasing to the eye. The exterior view left the impression of a stockade which an enemy would have difficulty in scaling. There was about six acres within the enclosure, at the east side of which was a lane some fifteen feet wide that led to the landing and which was also enclosed by the wall and bamboo hedge. On the west side was another opening leading to a clearing where maize was growing and to the north was a small opening to a mound of oyster shells, still used as a dump, for the bivalve was one of the principal sources of nourishment among the natives. The mound had evidently been used for centuries for large trees grew out of it at the farthest end.

In the center of the enclosure was the council house and home of Satouriana the mighty cacique of the Tumucuan. It was built of bamboo strips and palmetto fibre tied onto palmetto posts with the roof tightly thatched with grass and palmetto leaves. It stood upon a mound about two feet above the ground reached at the main entrance by two coquina rock steps much worn by constant usage, this entrance leading into a room forty feet square with boarded floor, well covered with rugs of woven moss, in the center of which was a pit for fire, with an opening for the smoke in the roof immediately above. The sleeping quarters for the cacique and his family which consisted of Olata and Ariola an unmarried daughter, was a hut adjoining and connected with the council house having a partition dividing it for male and female occupants.

All about the enclosure were huts and tepees usually circular in shape or arbors with no sides, but with leaves and brush laid on bamboo poles strung to palmetto posts. One of the larger arbors was the eating place for the inhabitants, except on special occasions when the cacique entertained in the council house.

Saturiba was the chief village of the Tumucuan where all the sagamores or under chiefs came to pay tribute to the mighty cacique whose father and grandfather had also reigned in undisputed sway. He was both loved and feared by his tribe, noted for his justice in dealing with his people, for his loyalty to his friends and implacableness to his foes.

All the inhabitants of the village knew of the coming of the white brother of Olata, son of their chief and the yell of the Indian as the canoe came around the bend of the creek was a signal of their arrival. The two young Indians greeted Roget cordially and as he stepped ashore he could see a crowd coming down the lane to meet him, numerous naked children, adults nude except for a girdle about their loins, squaws with mantles of bear grass and palmetto fibre fastened to their shoulders with the right arm free and with skirts of the same material that hung to the feet. Many of these carried their papooses on their back. The sannups, with more dignity, held back and waited at the farther end of the lane.

As Roget and Olata advanced the crowd parted, making way for them, the children shyly hiding behind their mothers all standing in silent awe until Roget greeted them kindly in their own tongue when there was an excited buzz of delight. Roget spoke to the sannups, most of who had seen him before on his visit to the village or on their visits to Fort Caroline.

He proceeded to the council house where Satouriana, bedecked in feathers and paint, wearing the robe presented to him by Laudonniere descended the steps, followed by his sagamores, and welcomed the white man to Saturiba. Then all went into the council house where he was invited to the seat of honor, beside the cacique, who sat on a rug beneath which was a pile of moss. The sagamores sat in a circle about them and Olata, who had disappeared for a moment, returned wearing the robe given to him by Adele and took a seat beside Satouriana.

A feast was served of oysters, fish and venison, with bread made of maize and a stew of beans and palmetto berries. The women waited upon the men and Roget recognized Ariola and her sister, the wife of Coacoochee one of the sagamores, and spoke to them much to their delight at being noticed. Excepting for the words of the white man, nothing was said until all had eaten, then there was much speechmaking in which the friendship of the Indians for Roget and his countrymen was dwelt upon at length.

Roget had not yet intimated to any one the object of his visit, so when it came his time to speak he thanked all for their hospitality to him and spoke fluently upon the long standing friendship of the French and Indians beginning with the first landing of Ribault. Then he told of the attack of the Spaniards upon the French when their nations were at peace, finally launching into a diatribe against the enemy for his treatment of Ucita and the inhabitants of Seloee. He gave an account of the expedition of Ribault against the Spaniards and of the wish of the great white father who came from the rising sun to have Satouriana and his sagamores join with him in the attack, ending by dramatically pledging his own word and that of Ribault to aid them against the Themogoans in return for their help.

Many of the Indians were aroused to a fever of excitement, some of them being outspoken for immediate action against the Spaniards. Even Satouriana, won by the promise of aid against his old enemy Outina was favorable, but Ucita, the sagamore at Seloee, had not spoken and Roget knew that much depended upon him, for under the law of the Tumucians the one aggrieved must have his say. All looked to Ucita who arose and said; 'Ucita has heard the words of the white brother of Olata, son of Satouriana, mighty cacique of the Tumucians, and the friendship of Ucita for the white brother of Olata is great, but the white cacique, who is enemy of the

great white father, came to Ucita with many presents and by signs he promised he would build another village for Ucita and his people and in a better place than Selooe. Why should Ucita make war upon the white cacique who bargains with him fairly."

The argument was hard to refute, and all looked at Roget as if for enlightenment, and he saw that he would surely fail in his undertaking unless he could bring Ucita to his own way of thinking, for there was a plan of local self government among the Tumucuans whereby the sagamore had certain powers in his own village. He arose and made his appeal to Ucita.

"Oh Ucita, brave sagamore of Selooe, whose deeds of valor are known throughout the land of the Tumucuans," he said, speaking very earnestly, "believest thou the words of the strange white cacique who comes to your land in the night? I, the friend of Ucita and the white brother of Olata, son of Satouriana mighty cacique of the Tumucuans, swear to you that the white cacique lies when he promised to build another village for Ucita and his people. Why does he not build a village for Ucita and his people, first before taking the council house and tepees at Selooe"?

Satouriana and the sagamores nodded their heads vigorously and emitted grunts of approval; Ucita, whose deep set eyes had been riveted upon Roget's face, dropped his gaze to the floor, Roget saw his opportunity and continued: "If the white cacique would treat Ucita fairly, let him withdraw from Selooe and let Ucita and his people return to their tepees until the white cacique has built the new village, then the white cacique can live at Selooe in peace." Roget knew quite well that Menendez would not leave Selooe and he hoped that his refusal would mean war with the Indians.

"That is fair," Satouriana said, and the others agreed in a chorus.

Ucita saw that he was in a hopeless minority, but he was slow to agree. "Ucita and his people have received many presents from the white cacique," he protested, "the white cacique will demand these presents returned to him which will give my people sorrow."

"The great white father will give to Ucita and his people many more presents than the white cacique has given," Roget rejoined promptly.

The Indian could not match the munificence or meet the arguments of the white man, especially when his own chief and all the sagamores were undoubtedly on Roget's side. Yet he tried to be fair to Menendez with whom he had bargained in good faith.

"Ucita will favor war against the white cacique if he will not leave Seloee," he said testily, "but the white cacique should have time to depart."

Roget knew that time was an essence in the plans of Ribault. The Admiral would probably attack the Spanish fleet in the morning and he would expect the warriors of Satouriana to be ready to join in the land attack not later than day following. If Menendez was allowed the time to negotiate, the all important moment would have passed and the value of the assistance of the Tumucians, for the time being at least, would be lost. If he could only persuade the Indians to deliver an ultimatum to the Spaniards to evacuate the village of Seloee or fight, he would have accomplished his purpose. So he fell in with the suggestion of Ucita though urging immediate action. This was in keeping with the tenor of the meeting, with the exception of the opinion of Ucita who was overruled, and it was decided that an envoy should be sent to Menendez at once.

Courtesy to the sagamore of Seloee demanded that he should be one of these since he and his people were the ones most affected, but Roget suggested to Satouriana, speaking aside,

that Coacoochee, the brother-in-law of Olata, should be one, since it was seen that Ucita leaned to the side of Menendez, and that the son-in-law of the mighty cacique would see that the interests of the Tumucuan were properly guarded. Satouriana readily saw the force of the suggestion and peremptorily appointed Coacoochee also.

It was planned that the envoys should set out at dawn with their retainers. They should reach Selooe by noon and, by order of Satouriana, Tolita, the runner, was to return with the answer, so that if the reply of the Spaniard was not satisfactory, the call for the warriors could be sent out in the early afternoon, and sufficient number could be mobilized for an attack by morning.

Roget was greatly pleased with the progress of events. In company with Olata he talked with Coacoochee after the pow-wow, who assured him that the Spaniard would not be allowed to dilly-dally.

The night was far along and Roget was shown to his bed which was a bear skin over moss on the floor of Satouriana's hut, he having the distinction of sleeping beside the mighty cacique himself, with Olata close by. This was not the first time that he had been the guest of the Indians and he knew that unless he fell asleep first that the chance of slumber was remote, for the old chief snored long and loud. All the preparation necessary for the night was the placing of his pack for a pillow, so he was not long in retiring, but try as he would, sleep did not come. It seemed that Satouriana was no sooner stretched out than he was in full blast and Olata followed a close second, and Roget was compelled to lie supinely and listen to the serenade.

His mind wandered back to Fort Caroline and to Adele. By the time he returned she would be fully recovered and out again in the open. He had promised Alphonse to be a brother to her and he would sacredly fulfill the trust, but it would be

hard to see her daily, loving her as he did, and knowing that she belonged to another. He wondered why Verdier had not spoken to him also, asking him to guard her, perhaps he had intended to, but in the hurry of their departure had not had the opportunity.

Then his thoughts followed Alphonse and Verdier with the fleet. Where were they now? Probably lying off the harbor at the mouth of the River of Dolphins waiting for morning to attack the Spaniards. He wished he could be with them to strike for France against the hated enemy, but then he was probably of more worth where he was, arousing the savages to fall upon them with tomahawk and spear where every arrow might mean a Spanish scalp and the riddance of an enemy of New France. He smiled grimly as he thought how well he was accomplishing his purpose.

Thus he fell into a fitful slumber until he was awakened at dawn by the stirring of those around him. Ucita and Coacoochee with their retainers were already preparing to start for Seloee. He went to the creek with Olata for a plunge and was refreshed, afterward enjoying a breakfast of venison and maize bread.

During the night the wind had shifted to the northeast, and by eight o'clock was blowing hard, and at nine suddenly increased to a gale and a driving rain set in. The Indians huddled in their tepees and huts and Roget sat in the council house with Satouriana and Olata discussing the prospects of the weather. Both believed there would be several days of storm, but neither seemed to fear that it would in any way hamper their plans, though both thought it would be very rough at sea. Even the Indians did not realize what was in store. The velocity of the wind increased and the rain fell harder than ever, which continued throughout the afternoon.

Roget asked Satouriana if he thought that Ucita and Coacoochee could reach Seloee, to which he proudly replied that

they would, for a Tumucuan never failed in a mission as long as there was life. But they would be delayed, he said, and he doubted if Tolita would be able to return before the following day.

The plan had been for Roget to remain at Saturiba until Tolita had returned and if Menendez refused to immediately evacuate Selooe for him to march with Satouriana and Olata at the head of the Tumucuans. Roget had hoped that the dawn of the next day would find him on the way, but now he knew that such was impossible. He even began to fear for the safety of Ribault and his fleet, for if they had not succeeded in entering the harbor of the River of Dolphins they would be compelled to ride before the storm and would be driven southward. He wished that Tolita would return that he might have news of Ribault's attack.

As night came on the gale increased to a hurricane, roaring through the live oaks, tearing the moss from the swaying limbs and hurling it through the air, bending the cabbage palmettoes almost to the ground, the rain beating through the roofs, leaving not a dry spot. The arbors were stripped of everything but their posts and bamboo stringers, and only the forest and wall, acting as a wind break saved the entire village from destruction. Satouriana and all the older men said that they had never seen such a storm, and Roget knew that unless Ribault had reached a harbor his fleet would be in grave danger.

There was no sleep in the village that night, for there was no spot where the water did not pour. The hurricane seemed to increase rather than to abate, and the huts and tepees began to go, the men being kept constantly at work strengthening the weak places in the frail structures. Satouriana was constantly among them encouraging to persevere and have faith in the Great Spirit.

Dawn came slowly through a murky incessant downpour,

if downpour it could be called, for the rain seemed to blow in sheets almost parallel to the earth. Roget had given up hope of hearing from Tolita when he arrived about noon, much to the delight of Satouriana, who had boasted that he would surely return. The runner reported that the world was covered with water, streams swollen far beyond their banks and that the trails even in the flat woods were lost in lakes. He had left Selooe late the previous afternoon, but was forced to put up for the night at a half-way village, the first time that Tolita, the fastest runner of Satouriana, had been halted by storm. He reported that the Spaniards were sorely distressed by the tempest, but evidently rejoiced at its coming since it had driven the French fleet to the south, for the French were just preparing to enter the harbor when the full force of the storm broke. Menendez had called his priests and people into the council room and with much ceremony offered a thanksgiving to God for their delivery.

Ucita and Coacoochee, with their retainers, had set out from Selooe with him, but had been left far behind. The white cacique had received them kindly, giving them many presents, and in answer to the demands made by the envoys to leave Selooe had attempted to put them off, promising to call a pow wow after the storm, but Coacoochee made signs that they must have his answer at once, whereupon the white cacique had sternly answered no, and Coacoochee had cast an arrow upon the floor and departed.

This news, which would have delighted Roget under different conditions, now brought him little comfort. He knew that the hurricane had saved the Spaniards and that he could not expect Satouriana to call out his warriors at least until the storm was over, even if it was possible to get a message to them. If conditions were bad at Saturiba, how much worse must they be in those villages built in the low lands along the rivers. Even now the lower part of Saturiba was submerged

and the creek was still rising, forcing those living there to move to the council house where the squaws and children were huddled together, while the huts and tepees were floating debris.

For three days the hurricane continued when the wind shifted to the southeast and moderated, but the rain did not cease. But instead of the constant downpour there were intermittent showers when it seemed that the clouds would open and spill all their contents at once.

Roget knew there was nothing more he could do at Saturiba and he longed to return to Fort Caroline, but there had been no communication with the other villages since Tolita's arrival and he had not dared to attempt the journey. Even the hardy Indian runner had not dared to venture out. But on the fifth day from his departure from Caroline he determined to make the effort. His nerves were on tension, his only sleep for four days and nights was while sitting against the wall with his clothes soaked and the water dripping upon him. The continued hollow thud as the rain struck the wet palmetto leaves on the thatched roof, the constant drip of the water on the floor, the damp clamminess of every thing he touched, the constant wailing of children and the sharp exclamations of frightened and impatient mothers had driven him almost to frenzy.

"I must return to Fort Caroline at once," he said peremptorily to Satouriana. "I fear for conditions there."

"The way will be hard and the white brother of Olata is welcome here," the old Chieftain replied kindly.

"I know that, and I thank you oh mighty Cocuque, but I cannot remain longer. My own people need me."

Olata stood by listening. "How will my white brother go?" he asked. "The water covers the earth and he cannot find the trail."

"I don't know," Roget answered doggedly, "but I must go."

"If my white brother goes, I must go with him."

"Oh no, Olata, you are needed here, I can make it alone." Roget was quick to assure him.

"No, Olata knows best," the young Indian rejoined, "Olata will take his canoe and go upon the waters where the dry land was."

Roget was secretly pleased that he could have the company of the Indian, for it at least meant the saving of energy and time, but he feared that Satouriana would object to his son's leaving, but to his surprise the old chief said, "Olata speaks wisely."

So it was agreed that they should depart at once, but before doing so Roget questioned Satouriana as to his plans for waging war against the Spaniards.

The venerable Chieftain laid his hand affectionately upon the white man's shoulder. "Since the Great Spirit has sent the storm Satouriana cannot say. The waters cover the fields of maize and there may be none for the harvest, and it is yet six moons before another harvest time shall come. Satouriana cannot lead his people into war when there is famine in the land. The ships of the great white father have been blown by the winds of the Great Spirit, whither we know not, and when he shall return we cannot say. Shall Satouriana wage war alone against the white cacique who fights with thunder? The white brother of Olata has but few to help. The Great Spirit has spoken in the storm. Perhaps he does not wish Satouriana to fight the white cacique. Who knows? But when the storm is over and the waters have receded and Tolita, the runner, can go forth and bring messages to Satouriana from his people throughout the land of the Tumucuan, then Satouriana will know. Then will Satouriana tell the white brother of Olata, whom Satouriana loves as a son, whether he will wage war against the white cacique."

Roget realized that the Indian was right, the welfare of his own people should be his first consideration, and he knew that

under similar conditions he himself would do likewise. So he assured Satouriana of his lasting friendship, thanked him for his hospitality and with a heavy heart set out with Olata in his canoe. The future was indeed black, if Ribault's fleet was destroyed, it was only a matter of time when the Spaniards would descend upon Fort Caroline and he thought with dread of the consequences. He must hasten back, report the news to Laudonniere and bend every effort to put the fort in the best possible state of defense.

As long as the canoe was in the creek the trees on the bank marked its channel, but when they entered the bayou the lines were lost, the marsh grass was completely covered and the region was a vast lake. But Olata, with unerring eye, kept the course, and after several hours through frequent showers they came to the point where the Indian said the trail came to the stream. But now all traces of the trail were gone, for the water had risen above the scrub palmetto, yet the Indian boldly paddled on, the water sogged leaves scraping against the bottom of the canoe. Roget had caught the trunk of a small tree floating in the creek and with Olata's hunting knife had trimmed the branches and made a pole, with which he helped to shove the canoe through the tangled mesh.

But finally, as the water became shallower, it was impossible to make headway against the stiff stalks, which held the canoe fast, but as the trail was well defined Roget proposed that he get out here and walk the rest of the way. It was waist deep and Olata offered to go with him further, but Roget would not hear of it for he knew that the Indian was needed at the village and could return by nightfall or a little after. Besides he knew the trail well that led over the bluff, so he bade him farewell, with the promise of the Indian that he would come to the fort, as soon as he could be spared from Saturiba, and report the doings at Seloee.

Roget had no trouble keeping the path between the line of

scrub and at each step the water became shallower until he finally reached the edge. He looked back and saw that Olata had come to the open water again, and was well on his way, so he turned and trudged up the hill. The sun suddenly appeared, but only for a moment—another bank of clouds was rolling in from the sea and another heavy shower drenched him, but it mattered little now for he had become accustomed to being wet, he had not felt a dry thread for four days and nights.

He neared the fort at dusk, so thoroughly fatigued that he stumbled as he walked, and in a hazy way kept thinking of some dry place where he might drop down and sleep, but his will power urged him on, for there were important things to do before he could rest.

CHAPTER XV

ST. AUGUSTINE

Jean Prevatt found that the very spot upon which he had slept beneath the palm in the Indian village of Seloee, when he had been so rudely awakened by the kick of the Spanish soldier, had been selected by Pedro Menendez as the site for his fort, which he had named St. Augustine. He wondered if the omen was good or bad for his own fortunes.

The San Palayo had laid off the harbor all the night following the visit to the River of May and the pursuit of the French fleet, and in the morning Menendez, with Father Mendoza and others, had gone ashore in a shallop and Prevatt had been allowed to follow in another. Not to be in the immediate presence of the Adelentado had hurt Prevatt's feelings, since the important part he had been allowed to play aboard the flagship the day previous, but he hoped that his services would soon prove sufficiently valuable to Menendez for him again to be accorded a place within the inner circle.

But he reached the shore in time to witness the ceremonies attending the landing of the Governor General of the Province of Florida. A solemn Mass was said in honor of Our Lady of September, it being the day, and when that was ended Menendez took possession of the land in the name of his Majesty King Phillip. Then the Adelentado called to him the officials of the King's Royal Exchequer and the Captains and the Camp Masters, and received their solemn oath to faithfully serve his Majesty with loyalty and fidelity.

After the ceremony, Menendez went to inspect the several

sites which Andres Lopez Patino and Juan San Vicenti had selected. He carefully examined all of these, but without hesitation selected the one where the Indian village of Seloee was located. There was no palisade around the village, but it was a collection of huts and tepees grouped about a large council house built of logs and thatched with palmetto leaves. Menendez fully realized the importance of promptly landing his arms and supplies on account of the close proximity of the French and the probability of an attack by them, and the council house and huts of the Indians would save him much time and labor which would be consumed in building others.

He determined to take possession of the village anyway, but if he could do so and retain the good will of the Indians it was certainly preferable. With Menendez to decide was to act and he straightway ordered a liberal supply of trinkets and other gifts, which he had brought for the purpose, to be taken to the council house and with a hundred soldiers as an escort he called upon the chief, taking Prevatt to act as interpreter.

With the landing of Patina and San Vicente in the morning with three hundred soldiers the Indians had looked on in wonder at the display, as corslet and morion, arquebus and halberd flashed in the early sunlight. Ucita, the chief, or sagamore, had by signs welcomed them kindly, in fact, he was proud to have the white men as his guests, for the French had always treated the Tumucuan fairly and he thought that all white men were alike. Therefore, when Menendez and his followers came to the council house they found a ready welcome.

Menendez presented the gifts and the hearts of Ucita and his people were made glad. The Adelentado then proceeded to business and called upon Prevatt to interpret his meaning to the sagamore. But Prevatt had never thought to give time to the study of the Tumucuan language and only knew a few words of salutation. Arrayed in his new apparel the appear-

ance of the renegade was entirely different from that of the miserable outcast who had sought food at the village a few days before and Ucita did not recognize him, but was greatly pleased to be accosted by the white man in his own tongue. Prevatt's limited vocabulary was of little value, however, in negotiations of such importance and his efforts to impress Menendez with his knowledge by attempting to make Ucita understand through a mixture of French and Tumucuan not only confused Ucita but annoyed Menendez, who dismissed him in disgust and took matters in his own hands.

The astute leader of the Spaniards appealed to the age old characteristic, the trait common to all races, cupidity; a universal language that needed no vocabulary. He had the gaudiest of his blankets and shawls brought forth, toys, beads, bells, trinkets which would please the eye and ear of the savage, and it seemed that those most tawdry or meretricious suited his purpose best. He had these laid out on the floor of the council house. In the meantime he had a drawing of houses made on a paper which was supposed to represent the new village which he would build for Ucita and his people. With signs he made it known to the savage that these would be his in exchange for the village of Seloee. After considerable haggling Ucita accepted, for he knew that with these wonderful gifts he could find a home for his people in a neighboring village or even the forest would not be uncomfortable in contemplation of a new village more elaborate than anything his savage mind could have conceived.

As the Indians moved out, the Spaniards moved in, for Alonzo Perez and Pedro de Valdea had obeyed the orders of the Adelentado and the disembarking was well under way. Menendez next designated the lines for the trenches which were for the present, at least, merely to fortify the village with the council house in the center. Prevatt saw, for the first time, the negro slaves which Menendez had brought with him.

They had been in the hold of the San Antonio, the ship which was left in the harbor of St. Augustine during Menendez expedition to the River of May. These slaves were put to work under guard, throwing up entrenchments of fascines and sand, and before the day was over sufficient had been accomplished so that several culverins could be placed on the side commanding the inlet with ammunition for them piled under hasty constructed shelters. Carpenters, soldiers and camp followers were engaged in building huts and a large house for the mess and one for the Adelentado.

Menendez gave orders that everything must be unloaded from the vessels within three days and that two of these, one of which was too large to cross the bar, should be sent to Hispaniola, for otherwise it might be captured by the French Armada. It was done as he had ordered and the two ships departed at midnight of the third day.

By this time the work was so well along that Father Mendoza and the other priests came ashore to live, occupying a house especially constructed for them, and Prevatt, as the protege of the vicar, was allowed a place in a hut nearby with two lay brothers. He was given full freedom with little to do and time hung heavily upon his hands. Menendez had paid no further attention to him, following his failure as interpreter in the negotiations with Ucita, and while he was at first chagrined by his evident loss of prestige, his confidence reasserted itself as he began to look about for means of self advancement.

He decided that he had found such means in the personage of Dona Juanita Acosta, niece of the Adelentado, to whom he was introduced by Father Mendoza. Time was also hanging heavily on the hands of the fair Juanita who chafed under the strict chaperonage of her duenna Dona Catalina Velasco.

Both women had heard Prevatt's story from Father Mendoza, and nothing had been lost in the telling, for the vicar

had sought the favor of the ladies in behalf of his protegee since he had found that Prevatt was held in contempt by the Spanish gentlemen for his conduct in betraying his own people, the very thing for which the Jesuit believed he would receive the reward of Heaven.

The officers were so busily engaged in the work assigned to them that Prevatt and the stories of his adventures offered the only means of entertainment for Dona Juanita who, above all things, insisted upon being amused. Prevatt, on the other hand, saw in the friendship of Juanita Acosta an avenue of approach to the good graces of her uncle the Adelentado, besides Dona Juanita was regarded a very beautiful woman by all who knew her, in addition to which she possessed the charms of agreeableness and vivacity, so Jean Prevatt saw no reason why his stay among the Spaniards should not be pleasant as long as he could remain under the guardianship of Father Mendoza and bask in the sunshine of Dona Juanita's smiles.

But all his dreams of happiness seemed destined to end in chaos, for on the fifth day after the landing the news came to him that the French fleet was off the outer harbor. Father Salvandi, the Dominican priest, told him as he was coming from his hut early in the morning.

From the first Prevatt had not liked the tall, lean ascetic with the sombre mien, who surveyed him with a cold gleam in his piercing eye and a cynical smile upon his thin lips, always addressing him as 'Monsieur El Capitan' in a sarcastic tone. He was so unlike Father Mendoza, the Jesuit.

"Friends of Monsieur El Capitan are calling this morning," the priest said nonchalantly as his black eyes seemed to read into the soul of the renegade.

Prevatt could not imagine to whom he was referring unless it should be Dona Juanita and the duenna, but why should they call at that early hour. His voice was very respectful as he

said, looking about, "I thank you, Father Salvandi, and may I ask where I may find my friends"?

The priest's upper lip curled a little more perceptibly, "Just outside the harbor, Monsieur El Capitan."

Prevatt could not fathom his meaning, perhaps the Dominican was in a facetious humor this morning. "The reverend father is jesting with me," he said smiling.

"Monsieur El Capitan may think it a jest when the French Admiral Jean Ribault is calling with four galleons and three caravels, but I am a Spaniard, to me it is a stern reality."

Prevatt's face turned an ashen gray, "What are you saying, Father? The ships of Ribault?"

"Only waiting for the rising tide to allow them to enter the harbor, and the brisk northeast wind is helping to bring the water into the inlet."

The renegade looked about him helplessly. He knew that the capture of St. Augustine by Ribault meant an ignominious death for him. The Spaniards might have safe conduct as prisoners of war, but not so with the traitor, it would be a rope for him. His first thought was a way of escape.

"Is not the Adelentado offering resistance?" he questioned impatiently.

"The Adelentado has barely escaped himself. He was on the outside during the night, I am told, to see that the two ships set sail for Hispaniola. He has just crossed the bar, as if by a miracle and has not had time to reach the fort. But Monsieur El Capitan will have an opportunity to welcome his friends, for the call to arms will be sounded shortly."

He had barely spoken when a trumpet was heard and Prevatt hastened away, wondering what fortune had next in store for him.

Father Salvandi followed him with his eyes for a moment. "He is not a spy," he muttered, "his fear was too real, but he is a traitor which is worse. I have no faith in his avowals. I

fear Father Mendoza is being misled, but that is no affair of mine." He shrugged his shoulders and proceeded calmly on his way.

Prevatt had found that the words of the priest were only too true, the seven vessels of the French Armada, their decks black with men were hovering off the entrance to the port, Menendez had just returned from his narrow escape across the bar and the call to arms had brought the soldiers to their stations in the partially constructed fort. There was a near panic, however, among the men, Prevatt could hear their mutterings and the curses poured out upon Menendez for sending the larger galleons away and leaving the unarmed vessels in the harbor to fall an easy prey to the enemy. Some even thought it would be foolhardy to attempt to resist, better throw themselves upon the mercy of the heretics than to suffer death in a useless battle.

The renegade thought only of himself, he knew Ribault's ability as an admiral and a leader, he could see nothing but defeat for the Spaniards and he began to reflect upon methods of escape. The forest and the Indians were his only salvation, his mind turned to Outina and the Themogoans, but as he remembered the nights alone in the scrub palmetto he shivered at the thought.

But Menendez never lost courage, he went among his men cheering them and pleading with them to be of stout heart. Mass was said in the open so that every one could hear. An hour passed and the tide was rapidly rising, the water over the bar getting deeper, and all knew what that meant. The continued waiting was getting on the nerves of the men. Menendez fell upon his knees before them and in a loud voice prayed that the Lord and the Holy Mother would help them in their dangers, all kneeled with him, and when they had arisen there was a perceptible calmness among the men in contrast to their previous restlessness. But the tide continued to

rise.

And then that happened which Menendez claimed was a miracle. The stiff northeast breeze which had so strongly favored the French, suddenly arose to a gale, the sea became very rough and the French Armada was forced to stand off shore to keep from being blown aground. But the velocity of the wind continued to increase until the gale became a hurricane and the Spaniards saw the ships of their enemies, one by one, blown before the storm as if by the hand of God. The rain poured in torrents, but what mattered that since St. Augustine had been saved? All that could assembled in the council house while the rest, even those whose curses were loudest against the Adelentado, stood in the pouring rain as the *Te Deum Laudamus* was sung and Menendez and his officers, kneeling, kissed the cross.

As they were departing from the house after the ceremony Menendez was told that Ucita and another chief with a company of Indians desired a conference with him. The Adelentado received them kindly, giving them a few presents and endeavored to learn the object of their visit. After much difficulty he gathered from their signs and the word Satouriana that the chief by that name was threatening to declare war on account of his having ousted Ucita from the village of Seloee.

This information sorely distressed Menendez, for he thought he had sufficient troubles at present. He knew that Ribault would return after the storm and war with the Indians and French at the same time would mean the end of his rule in Florida. He sent for Prevatt and inquired particularly as to the power of this chief Satouriana. Prevatt told him frankly that he was the Cacique of the powerful tribe of Tumucuaus and that Ucita and the other chief with him, named Coacoochee, were only sagamores or sub-chiefs, that Satouriana's word was law from a point far south of St. Augustine to the region north of the River of May and to the west as far as the

land of the Themogoans. Menendez did not know the extent of the territory covered, but his respect for Satouriana was greatly increased. He wanted him for an ally instead of an enemy.

"Oh for an interpreter, through whom I could converse with these savages," he said in exasperation to Patino who stood beside him, and then he turned angrily upon Prevatt, "You have been here over a year and cannot help me," and he dismissed the renegade from his presence. "I have made an honest bargain with this chief Ucita," he continued, speaking to Patina," but now I found I was dealing with the wrong savage; we cannot give him back his village, and yet I do not want the Indians to be my enemies. It is a difficult problem."

His offer to send gifts to Satouriana was met with a vigorous shake of the head by Coacoochee. Menendez decided that he would play for time and made signs that he would call a council and let them know within a week. Utica and Coacoochee conversed together for a moment and then, to Menendez's surprise, one of them hurled an arrow on the floor and all left the council house. The Adelentado did not understand, but he feared some sinister meaning, so he sent again for Prevatt, and learned that it meant a declaration of war. By this time, however, the Indians had departed.

But Menendez faced the situation courageously. If he had to fight the powerful Satouriana, whom he wished to make his friend, he would accept the challenge. So he pushed the building of his entrenchments as rapidly as possible, and though the wind and rain increased the negro slaves were kept at work without respite.

In each hour of the increasing hurricane, Menendez saw the hand of God destroying his enemies. By the fourth day of the storm, the most furious he had ever seen, he knew that Ribault's fleet was either destroyed or so badly shattered that it would be some time before he would be able to attempt an

attack. His mind began to turn to Fort Caroline. Why should he not capture it while its defenders were absent? He inquired of Prevatt the distance by land and as to the difficulties to be encountered, and the renegade seeing a way to reinstate himself readily claimed that he could lead the way as he himself had come to Selooe through the forest.

The thought of attacking Fort Caroline grew in the Adelen-tado's brain as the days passed. The Indians had not molested him, perhaps they, too, were hampered by the storm and in the lowering clouds he saw a sign, that the elements were in his favor, that it was the will of God that he, Pedro Menendez, should as His agent and as the servant of his Catholic Majesty, King Phillip of Spain, launch a crusade against the heretics.

So he called a council of his captains and camp masters to which he also invited the priests, the lay brothers, Prevatt and others, and as the rain fell upon the roof of the council house he addressed them: "Gentlemen and Brothers, I am asking you to shoulder a heavy burden with me, but it is not only for the King, our Master, but it is in the enterprise of God our Lord, and if you serve well in this, the guerdon of Heaven cannot fail you. A great opportunity presents itself to my soul and reason which it behooves us to take advantage of. The French Armada that came against us has suffered at the hands of God, the heretic thinking he would encompass our destruction has taken with him the best of his men and arms from the defense of his fort, and the contrary winds prevent his returning. Now, my brothers, we know that these are all Lutherans, we know this because, before our departure from Spain we were advised that Jean Ribault, their general, issued a proclamation, before sailing, that under penalty of death no one should embark who was not of the New Religion and that no one should take books with them that were not of that faith. And, furthermore, many of you know, for you heard them certify this to us, when our fleet lay at anchor with them outside of

their harbor, that they were Lutherans. For this reason the war we have with them can only be carried on with fire and sword, for they, who are Lutherans, seek us, who are Catholics, to prevent our implanting the Holy Ghost in these provinces. And we seek them because they are Lutherans in order that they may not implant their evil and detestable sect in this land nor teach their belief to the Indians. Therefore, gentlemen and brothers, it is my purpose to go on an expedition against these heretics, taking a Frenchman with me who has lived in their fort for a year, who knows the trails and the country for many leagues around. We will surprise the heretics, who will not know of our presence, and come upon them at dawn putting them to the sword. We cannot fail, for the Lord Our Redeemer will favor us, but should we not capture their fort we will have successfully reconnoitered the country and their fortifications and they will be afraid of us in such manner that they will leave us here in security during the winter until next March when we will have forces to go against them by sea as well as by land. Therefore, it seems to me that we should take five hundred men, one-half arquebusiers and one-half pikemen, and rations for eight days in our knapsacks. And so my brothers I preach unto you a crusade against the enemies of God."

The Adelentado suddenly ceased to speak and fell upon his knees. The shower had ceased but a moment before and there was a death-like stillness in the room, so still that the only sounds were the drops of water falling from a leak that resounded with a hollow echo. And the silence continued for a full two minutes as long as he knelt with his face raised and his lips moving without a sound. Then he arose and calmly took his seat on a rough bench upon a dias which had been placed at the end of the room.

In the discussion which followed, some of the captains favored and some opposed the plan, Francisco de Recalde lead-

ing the opposition. Prevatt watched Menendez as he sat with his chin slightly raised, his face exhibiting no sign of his thoughts, but his eyes flashing quickly from one to the other as the various captains spoke their minds. And the renegade wondered who would win, whether or not fortune would take him back to Fort Caroline again.

During a moment's silence, Menendez sprang to his feet and dramatically raising his hand pointed his finger upward and spoke almost in a stage whisper, though all could hear his words, "gentlemen and brothers, I say unto you that he among you who shows weakness and does not encourage the officers and soldiers in their duty should hold himself accursed." He paused for an instant, looked heavenward and continued in a louder tone, "but he who is faithful shall have the blessings of God our Lord and Redeemer."

Again he took his seat, and there was a protracted silence, Francis de Recalde said no more, Menendez asked for the decision and there was not a dissenting voice. The expedition would be made.

Menendez's manner instantly changed. From the leader in thought he became the leader in action, from the ecclesiastic to the soldier. "On the third day at dawn," he commanded, "we will hear mass and will start immediately, Pedro Valdes, you and Villarroel will arrange at once for the selection of the men. They shall be given sufficient amount of powder, wicks and lead so they may make small shot and bullets. You, Captain Bartolomew Menendez, my brother, shall have command of the fort and soldiers here during my absence, and you, Florenz de Valdes, shall be general of the ships in the harbor and hold them and the sailors in readiness."

The meeting adjourned and all went forth apparently contented, but Prevatt soon heard complaints among the soldiers, not so much on account of the expedition as the fact that some of the officers, especially Francisco de Recalde and Diego de

Maya were opposed to it and spoke openly of the dangers. This had the effect of making the soldiers faint-hearted and the murmurings increased. But the preparations continued.

Prevatt was not present, but he heard the outcome of it all from Dona Juanita Acosta when in company with Father Mendoza he went, on the night before the departure, to bid her farewell. It was the first time that Prevatt had visited the house of the Adelentado and he regarded it a special honor accorded him by the kind-hearted Jesuit. Pedro Menendez was absent, which was a relief to the renegade. Father Mendoza was in earnest conversation with Dona Catalina, which gave Prevatt the privilege of a pleasant tete-a-tete with Juanita. "I trust that Captain Prevatt will not be absent from us long," she said graciously.

"However, short the time may be, it will seem quite long, Dona Juanita," he answered with an air of mystery.

"A paradoxical statement and one too deep to fathom," she retorted naively, pretending not to understand.

"I fear to explain lest I might offend," he said humbly.

"A soldier should never fear."

"On the field of battle, no. . ." he completed the sentence with a deprecatory smile.

"Then I am sure that Captain Prevatt will return victorious." Juanita knew that the eyes and ears of the dueña were very sharp. She would wait for a more propitious time to listen to the Frenchman's flattery. "I understand the way is through a wilderness, but that you know the trail and can guide them safely," she said raising her voice slightly.

"Yes, if the men will follow I will lead them," he said boastingly.

"They will follow, never fear. There was some dissension but my uncle put an end to that." She laughed softly as if the incident had been amusing.

"Tell me, I hadn't heard," she had invited the question and

Prevatt was eager to learn all.

"Captain Francisco de Recalde and Captain Diego de Maya decided that the Adelentado should change his mind concerning the expedition against the heretics, and it seems they believe they had considerable following in their position, so much so that they were emboldened to consider demanding a change of the Adelentado's plans. My uncle heard of it and before they had opportunity to speak to him concerning the business he invited them to dine with him here, the first day we occupied the house. In the course of the meal my uncle said, without reference to Recalde or Maya, that any officer who would agree in council and afterward raise objections to the detriment of the plans was guilty of a mortal sin and should lose his rank and be punished by imprisonment without trial. Recalde and Maya have had nothing more to say."

"Your uncle, the Adelentado, is a wise man as well as a brave soldier," Prevatt said admiringly.

"Yes, and with it all he is the kindest and gentlest of men."

Now this estimate of Pedro Menendez was not at all in accord with Jean Prevatt's opinion of him and he really thought that Juanita was jesting. So he answered with a simple "yes." But she caught the doubt in his tone and hastened to say. "Really, I mean it. My uncle is greatly misunderstood. He is thought to be harsh and cruel, but we who see him in his home know he is gentle and kind and the soul of honor and sincerity."

There was no further opportunity for discussion of the character of Menendez, for Father Mendoza had arisen and Prevatt must say farewell to the ladies who wished him a safe return.

The next morning at daybreak trumpets, fifes and drums sounded the reveille, the bells chimed and all thronged to mass, and, having heard it, the captains began to form the companies in marching order.

The Adelentado was to lead the way, with his two porters carrying his armor, and with twenty soldiers, Biscayans and Asturians, famed as woodcraftsmen, with hatchets to mark the way pointed out by Prevatt. Menendez had instructed him to select a route away from the Indian villages, lest there might be danger of ambush, or the savages might send runners to the heretics and advise them of their coming. This exactly suited Prevatt, for that was the only route he knew, since he himself had avoided the Indian villages when he had fled from Fort Caroline. It was not the shortest route, but he had come that way since he had feared the Tumucuan might inform the French of his whereabouts.

As Prevatt was waiting for the companies to form, Father Mendoza came to him with his blessing and a kindly farewell. As the Jesuit walked away Prevatt heard a voice behind him and before he turned he knew it was Father Salvandi speaking.

"So Monsieur El Capitan is to be our Moses who will lead us into the wilderness."

"And out of it too, I hope, Father Salvandi," Prevatt answered, noting the usual cynical smile.

"Let us all hope," the priest responded grimly.

"So you are to honor us with your company." Prevatt continued for nothing better to say.

"Yes, the heretics will need the true word, or perchance there might be some of the faithful amongst them. And then, perhaps, Monsieur El Capitan himself might need me; who knows? The fortunes of war are uncertain." The cynical smile broadened.

Prevatt shuddered. The black woolen mantel of the Dominican, the darkness of which was emphasized by the snowy whiteness of his habit and scapular brought sombre thoughts to the mind of the renegade who was returning to the scenes of so many of his own crimes. He caught the veiled meaning

of the friar, and the suggestion that it might fall to his lot to receive the sacrament of extreme unction made his blood run cold. He turned and walked away without answering, as Father Salvandi chuckled audibly.

It was the afternoon of September 19th, the fourth day after the departure from St. Augustine, that Prevatt announced they were in the vicinity of Fort Caroline. In the tall timbers, a quarter of a league south of the Fort, the Spaniards camped for the night, but no fires could be built lest the heretics might know of their presence.

It had been a strenuous journey through a tractless regions, in flat woods made lakes by the incessant rain, over saw palmetto plains that seemed never to end, across boggy marshes that seemed to have no bottom. But they had not seen an Indian and they believed their presence was unknown to the enemy. The soldiers murmured, but Menendez did not hear. With indefatigable energy he continued to go amongst them, cheering them with encouraging words, complimenting them upon their fortitude and praising their devotion to the cause of Christ.

Their powder, wicks and biscuits in their knapsacks and all clothes were soaked with water and there was no way to dry them. One of the captains desired to know of what use his company of arquebusiers would be with wet powder, to which Menendez replied caustically: "There should be dry powder in the fort of the heretics, we will get it there."

An hour before dawn the soldiers sent out to reconnoiter returned with the news that all was quiet at the fort. As the dawn was breaking in a constant downpour Menendez called his captains together and said to them: "I am a great sinner, but I have prayed all this night, entreating our Lord and His Precious Mother to show us favor against our enemies. We will now pray for victory, each of us." Everyone kneeled and when they had finished the voice of the Adelentado arose above

the storm. "The heretics are before you, the wilderness is behind you, advance in the name of God and Spain, and he who falters shall suffer the penalty of death."

The captains returned to their companies. Menendez called Prevatt to him. "Captain Prevatt," he said not unkindly, "That which I am about to do should not offend if you are honest, for you will be released as soon as the attack is made. But if you are otherwise my precautions will not be amiss. Bind him." The order was to an attendant who stood by with a rope. Prevatt's hands were quickly lashed behind his back and the end of the rope was handed to Menendez himself, who accepted it smiling and said to Prevatt, "I am with thee, so be sure thou leadest me in the right path."

It was all done so suddenly and Prevatt was so astounded that he could not speak. The order, to march was given, he saw beside him the black mantle of the Dominican priest and in the gray light of the morning he thought he saw a deepening of the cynical smile, but he knew that he heard the chuckle.

CHAPTER XVI

Despondency

The sentinel, standing at the east gate of Fort Caroline, looked disgustingly out upon a water soaked world—another shower and surely there had been enough, he thought—as the rain beat heavily upon his rude shelter. It was getting dark, time for an exchange of watch and he was very glad, for it had been a lonely, monotonous wait, not a human being had he seen except the Captain of the watch on his hourly rounds, not a living thing in sight on the outside for even the birds and animals seemed to have gone to cover. Not even an Indian had visited the Fort since the storm had set in five days before. Caroline had been a gloomy place since Admiral Ribault and his fleet had departed.

Suddenly the sentinel stared through the dusk and rubbed his eyes. There was a moving object on the trail to the bluff, an object that seemed to stagger as it walked. At first he thought it must be a wild animal but as it came nearer he saw that it was a man.

“Who goes there,” he challenged, but the man apparently had not heard, or if so paid no attention, but staggered on.

The match of the sentinel’s arquebus was not lighted and the priming was probably too wet anyway, so he grasped his pike and stood ready.

“Who goes there?” he repeated.

The man suddenly halted a few yards away and looked at him as if just awakened.

“Captain Roget,” the sentinel gasped, as the man took refuge

under the shelter.

"Ah, Bartholomew," Roget said wearily as he recognized the soldier, "I am back again. It has been a long way from Saturiba today." He shook the water from his hat and leaned heavily against a post.

The sentinel looked in amazement at the drenched figure.

"No wonder I didn't know you."

"How goes it here, Bartholomew?" Roget asked, pulling himself together with an effort.

"Bad, Captain Roget," Bartholomew replied, "Captain Laudonniere has been ill again, and Lieutenant Baillot has had a hard time managing some of his men. We have needed you."

"Captain Laudonniere sick again?" Roget repeated.

"Yes, with the fever, and it has been bad for him, they say, with all the water leaking in his room. In the men's quarters the roof is like a sieve, and they have cut us down on our rations and . . ."

Roget was moving through the gate. "You are not well," Bartholomew continued as Roget stumbled.

"I am all right, a little sleep is all I need," he said as he moved away, not wishing to hear further complaints. It reminded him of the days before Ribault came.

As he crossed the parade there registered in his brain, even in its extreme weariness, the contrast between conditions now and before Ribault's departure. Then, there was light, life, activity, now there was darkness, quiet, gloom. Not a soul was in sight, even the sentinels huddled under cover and the Captain of the watch was evidently paying more attention to the guard room than to the efficiency of his patrol. Suppose the Spaniards should come under these conditions, what chance would there be against them? Thank God the storm would at least keep them away.

He went straight to his room to get some dry clothes. Oh, to have a bath and to get rid of this wet, sticky apparel. He

found Charnay reading and the chaplain looked up suddenly from his book with an expression quickly changing from surprise to delight.

"Oh, Louis," he exclaimed as he rushed to him, "God has sent you back to us. We did not know, we thought you might have perished," and he placed a kiss on each cheek.

Roget threw his wet pack into the corner and fell rather than sat in a chair. Charnay noted his haggard face and bloodshot eyes.

"You are not well and you are soaked," he said feeling his shirt.

"Soaked," Roget growled, "I have forgotten how it feels to be dry, I have been wet for five days without a change of raiment."

"Take some brandy," Charnay poured a liberal portion which Roget swallowed eagerly.

"Now I'll be all right after some food and sleep."

As he removed his wet clothes Charnay continued the tale of woe begun by Bartholomew—storm, hurricane, rain, Laundonniere sick, the men grumbling and signs of mutiny. The houses had all leaked, even his own bed had been moved to avoid the drops.

"Tell me about Adele," he asked when Charnay had halted.

"She is splendid, yes, splendid in every way," Charnay replied enthusiastically, "fully recovered in health, and a treasure in helping with the sick. She has virtually taken charge of the women, ministering to their needs and encouraging those who are downcast. I do not see how we could get along without her."

"I will see her in the morning," Roget said and his heart glowed at the thought. "Have you heard anything from Ribault or the fleet?" he continued after a moment.

"No, have you?"

Roget repeated Tolita's story, how the storm had struck just

as Ribault was preparing to attack the Spaniards at Selooe and how he was forced to take to the open sea and was driven south by the storm."

"Perhaps he has made a safe harbor," he concluded.

"Let us hope so," Charnay murmured fervently.

After Roget had completed his toilet, they went to the mess and then to Laudonniere's room, for he insisted that, fatigued as he was, he wished to report to his commanding officer before seeking rest.

They found the commander seated in a chair with a light quilt thrown around him, Lieutenant Baillot was there and Piere the boy was asleep on the pallet in the corner. The rain had ceased for the moment but drops from the soaked roof still spattered in the vessels placed about the floor. Laudonniere's thin emaciated face lighted up when he saw Roget and Baillot wrung his hand in delight.

Roget briefly gave an account of his adventures at Saturiba, the result of his negotiations with the Indians and what he had heard concerning Ribault.

The four men looked helplessly at one another as each thought of the dreadful possibilities, if Ribault's fleet was lost.

"He should have taken my advice and remained here," Laudonniere said petulantly. "I feared the storm would come."

"Now that the sea is more calm, at least some of the vessels must have escaped and will return here shortly," Baillot remarked encouragingly.

Roget arose to go. He was very tired and sleepy, but there was one very important matter concerning which he must speak. "We must prepare at once for the coming of the Spaniards," he said gravely.

All looked at him in surprise.

"Coming of the Spaniards?" Laudonniere repeated, ques-

"Yes, our guard is not sufficient. There should be outposts tioningly.

established."

"Lieutenant Baillot is in command of the sentinels, I think he is quite capable of seeing to that," Laudonniere said with just a note of pique in his tone.

"I am sure he is," Roget hastened to say, "it is not Lieutenant Baillot I criticise, he knows that," and he turned appealingly to the young officer, "but it is our policy, I mean that we must be more watchful in the future."

"You don't think the Spaniards would attempt an attack in this weather?" Baillot queried.

"Probably not," Roget replied solemnly, "but the time is coming when they will come either by sea or by land, and we must be prepared."

"Let us go," Charnay said bluntly, taking Roget's arm. "Captain Laudonniere needs rest and so do you. Tomorrow you can discuss the Spaniards."

The physician knew that the nerves of at least two of those present were in no condition for a controversy. He urged his friend to his room and soon had him snug in bed. As Roget sank into a deep slumber his thoughts were that nothing in his life had ever seemed quite so luxurious as a dry place to sleep, and although another shower began to pelt the roof, rain had no terrors for him now.

Charnay gave orders that he should not be disturbed in the morning and it was well toward noon when Roget awakened. After a hasty breakfast he hurried to find Adele. She was superintending the laundry, the rain had prevented the women washing the clothes in the river and Challeux the carpenter had made rude troughs which were placed under a shed built for the purpose.

She met him with a smile—Charnay had told her of his return—and they started to stroll across the parade, when a shower drove them beneath the shelter at the front of the women's house. His first words were of her and she in turn

wished to know how he had fared during the days he had been away, then she asked him concerning Alphonse and Ernest, and when he thought they would return."

"The sea is calmer now, and it should not be long," he said encouragingly, for he did not have the heart to tell of his fears. And then he added, "Verdier will also be with them."

"Yes," she said, and as he thought, with unwarranted nonchalance, "Charles will be with them," adding wearily after a pause, "if they come at all."

"If they come at all!" Roget exclaimed, "You don't mean,—"

She interrupted him. "I don't know what I mean, Louis. I admit I fear the worse. During those awful nights of the hurricane, whether it was in my dreams or in vision of waking moments, I know not, but I could see them struggling in the wreckage of their ships, and again I saw them on a barren shore, Alphonse was rescuing Ernest from the surf."

"They were only dreams," he said soothingly.

"I don't know, perhaps so, but the fear remains."

"Anyway they are safe, even if your dreams are true."

"But when shall we see them again?"

She was leaning against the post of the shelter, her head was bowed and she gazed vacantly on the ground where the water was dripping from the eaves. So forlorn, so helpless, Roget thought, so alone in the world, no one to care for her now but him, and yet a chasm divided them. If he could only take her in his arms, take her for his own forever, but it could not be for she loved another.

"Did Alphonse tell you of our compact?" he asked finally.

"What?" she said startled.

"That I would be a brother to you, that you could always come to me as you have always gone to him."

"Yes, he told me." Tears came into her eyes. "And it is a great comfort to have you as my protector, Louis. You are so strong, so good."

It was on his lips to say, "And some day, if Verdier should not return, perhaps . . .," but he held his tongue. That would not be loyalty to his brother officer.

Concerning the affairs of the fort he found she was well informed and was fully aware of its miserable defenseless condition. She told him of the breach in the rampart, of which he had not been previously advised, and he hastened to investigate for if what she said was true, something must be done at once.

It was even worse than she had said. The river had risen, overflowing into the trenches which had undermined the palisades and there were three breaches with the possibility of another. The two guns left by Ribault had been dislodged, their supports giving away under the weakened wall.

Standing on the rampart he could obtain a view of miles and miles of water, the marsh land to the west was entirely covered, not a blade of grass could be seen, and the flood had reached into the woodland at the south. The wharf was inundated and the shallops tied to it were partially submerged, the ropes pulling them down into the rising freshet. The two brigantines were safely anchored in the muddy river, but there was evidently little communication between them and the shore.

As he viewed the ruinous condition of the fort and saw that no attempt was being made to remedy the defects, his heart sank within him. He knew that if Laudonniere had been well, it would have been different, but Baillot, new in office, feared to make suggestions to his superior officer whose illness had made him so nervously sensitive of his authority. He must take the lead at any cost, the lives of all depended upon it.

Into Charnay's ears he poured the story of the calamitous state and the direful consequences that must surely result, arousing the Chaplain to the point that he agreed to go with him to plead with Laudonniere.

But the Commander looked with suspicion on the suggestion

that supreme authority should be placed in the hands of Roget.

"The present conditions are the result of another having been placed over me," he said bitterly.

"I will not be over you, Rene," Roget pleaded. "There is no intention to usurp your authority, you merely delegate it to me while you are ill."

"But you can advise me," Laudonniere argued, "and I can tell you what to do."

"You should not be distressed with these matters while you are ill," interposed Charnay.

Laudonniere turned angrily upon the physician. "If you would only cure me of this wretched fever, I could attend to these matters myself."

Roget saw the look of pain that passed over the face of his friend.

"There, there, Rene," he said reprovingly to Laudonniere as if speaking to a child, "it is the fever not Rene Laudonniere who speaks thus to one who had done so much for him."

Laudonniere burst into tears, "Yes, Louis, you are right. I should not have said that. Forgive me, Charnay."

"I will forgive, Rene, but do as we say. Let Louis have the authority while you are ill. It is the best for all."

"Very well," Laudonniere said resignedly, "I suppose it is the only thing I can do."

And so it was arranged. Roget proceeded to organize the garrison as best he could. He found that of Ribault's followers left at the fort, only ten had weapons, of the others were four boys, one brewer, a cross bow maker, two shoe makers, a player on the spinet, Challeux the carpenter over three score years of age, eighty-six camp followers and the women and children. Of the remnant of Laudonniere's garrison, left by Ribault, there were only seventeen who could bear arms, the remainder being ill or still suffering from wounds received in the Indian wars. Yet with this miserable

company he set out to put the fort in condition to resist the attack of the Spaniards which he believed would surely come.

"I thank God," he said to Charnay, "that the same storm that has almost destroyed us will keep the Spaniards away for a time at least.

He had the shallops pulled ashore and secured to trees at the height of the flood so that they would be available at any moment if a retreat to the ships in the river would be necessary, and made arrangements whereby others should be sent from the brigantine if the alarm should be given. He divided the forces into two watches placing Baillot in charge of one and Lieutenant La Vigne, the next in rank, in charge of the other, providing each with lanterns and an hour glass in order to set the time for their duty. In addition to the sentinels at the gates and on the ramparts he placed outposts on the edge of the forest who should give the signal. "All's well" at stated intervals, and re-established the lookout on the bluff during the day to advise the presence of a sail.

To those who were unaccustomed to bear arms he made accustomed to the use of the spade by putting them to work repairing the breaches in the ramparts, and each day went among them with words of encouragement, each night spending much of his time at the guard house or visiting the sentries personally to see that watchfulness was observed. When he slept it was with his clothes on so that he could be called at any moment.

It was a herculean task and beset with many difficulties. The matter of supplies needed Roget's careful attention. Fortunately there was plenty of ammunition, Ribault had left them all they needed, but they could not eat powder and shot. It was food, the thought of famine in the months to come which gave him most concern, for there rang in Roget's ears the words of Satouriana that the flood might destroy the crop of maize and there could not be another raised for six months.

He could not expect his friend to feed the French when his own people were starving, he must husband his own resources. Already the rations of the men had been reduced but they must be further curtailed.

As each day passed with no word from Ribault, his hopes diminished and the gloom in the fort increased. Each day the lookout on the bluff scanned the horizon and reported no sail, and yet Roget knew that the presence of one might spell disaster for it might mean the coming of the Spaniards instead of the return of the fleet. It was even suggested that they embark in the brigantines and return to France, but the hope of Ribault's return, held them on, the women, especially those whose husbands or brothers were with him standing steadfast to remain.

The men murmured at the hard work and short rations, mutiny was rife, three were placed in the dungeon for insubordination, each day was a succession of showers, utter dejection pervaded the colony but with dogged determination Roget pushed the work along. To make his problems harder Laudonniere recovered sufficiently to go about and while he left Roget in charge and held him responsible, he countermanded his order without consulting him. The men who were insubordinate were released and returned to their work praising the mercy of Laudonniere and condemning the injustice of Roget. It was noised about that all one would have to do to be excused from duty was to appeal to Laudonniere, who acted as if fearing Roget's power, he desired to court favor with the men.

During these hours of trial Adele Darboux was an inspiration to Roget, her help and counsel, her sweet companionship in his spare moments cheered him to carry on, and Charnay with his religious consolation both to him and the entire colony, eased many a rough place. Each day, in the little chapel, the chaplain held his simple service encouraging all to be steadfast in the faith and to sacrifice for the cause of the New Re-

ligion and for the glory of New France, pointing them to God, the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

And notwithstanding almost insurmountable obstacles the work went slowly on. Two of the breaches in the ramparts were repaired and only the one on the north side was left, and this was protected by the high water in the river. "Another week," Roget said to Charnay, "and I will have the defenses in fair condition."

And thus the fateful nineteenth of September arrived.

CHAPTER XVII

THE BATTLE

On the morning of the nineteenth the sun rose in a cloudless sky and its bright rays cut sharply through the clear atmosphere making myriads of diamonds out of the rain drops which clung to the foliage.

Everyone thought the storm was over and good weather had come at last. A better feeling pervaded the colony at Fort Caroline, but Roget was not so sure that good weather might not mean the earlier coming of the Spaniards. Anyway, he hoped that it might bring Olata, for he had not seen the Indian since his return from Saturiba and he wished to learn, if possible, of the activities of the Spaniards at Selooe. He knew that the calamities attending the hurricane and heavy rains had kept Olata away during the past week for there had evidently been much to occupy his time. He hoped that his continued absence might be due to a visit to Selooe to obtain information for the French colony.

But Olata did not come, and during the day the clouds began to gather, by the middle of the afternoon a steady rain had set in, a repetition of the previous ten days. In the evening Roget made his rounds to see that all was well as a torrent drenched the ramparts and deluged the parade.

At the guard house he was told by La Vigne that the outposts were not on duty.

"By whose orders?" Roget asked in surprise.

"By the orders of Captain Laudonniere," La Vigne replied. Roget said no more but went to Laudonniere's room

where he found the commander with Baillot.

"I understand from La Vigne that you have ordered the outposts recalled," he said as mildly as he could.

"And why not?" Laudonniere replied in a defiant tone as he sat back in his chair. "Would you have the poor fellows stay out there in the forest on a night like this?" The rain was beating on the roof and much of it seeping through onto the floor where there were not sufficient utensils to accommodate the leaks. He waved his hand over the room. "See what it is even in here."

Roget knew all this but there were matters of more vital importance. "But suppose the Spaniards should come . . ." he began.

Laudonniere interrupted him. "The Spaniards? Do you think this Menendez is a wizard? How could he get here, pray? The lookout reported 'no sail,' at night fall. He could not land until morning if he comes by sea. You and I know the territory between here and Selooe and it would be impossible for him to come in this flood." His voice became less harsh. "I know that your intentions are good, Louis, but you are over cautious. Our men will mutiny under such discipline as you impose."

Roget turned away sadly, but paused at the door, "Of course it will be as you say, Rene, but I fear for the lack of discipline. The Spaniards may not come tonight, they may not come tomorrow night, not the next, but I believe they will come, and if the outposts are allowed to seek shelter every time it rains then I fear the Spaniards will take us unawares." He opened the door and went out.

In his own room he poured his vial of discontent into Charnay's ears. The Chaplain listened, but said nothing, his fear was not so much from an attack of the Spaniards as a break between Laudonniere and the only one in whom he had faith to lead them out of their difficulties.

"Be patient with Rene, Louis," he said finally, "He is high strung and nervous. Let us put our faith in God. I do not believe He will let our enemies assail us. Come, let us pray for His protection and guidance."

Roget did not answer but knelt beside Charnay who prayed for deliverance from their enemies, and besought the blessings of God upon New France and the followers of the New Religion.

When they arose Roget prepared for his bed, but he only removed his doublet and shoes, and his rapier lay close by his side as he slept.

He awakened several times during the night only to hear the rain beating on the roof, and as the dawn crept murkily in through the window he turned over, tired and restless trying to get a little more rest before he arose for the labors of the day. And as he dozed he half dreamed that he heard a trumpet call, but so real that he sat up in bed and listened. But Charnay lay undisturbed, there was only the noise of the rain and he started to rest again, when it sounded faintly, but clearly, the call to arms.

He sprang from his bed, slipped on his shoes, grasped his sword and rushed from the room calling Charnay as he ran. From the gallery of the officers' quarters he could see figures moving through the rain, across the parade, and now the trumpet was sounding the call loud and long, while from the direction of the main gate he heard a cry in Spanish: "Santiago, down with the heretics." A shot sounded above the other noises. He knew the Spaniards had come, but they were yet on the outside of the fort, there might be a chance.

His first thought was of Adele and the women. He ran back into the room, Charnay was dressing. He spoke as calmly as he could. "The Spaniards are attacking. Get the women and children to the breach on the north side. Be ready to take them to the shallops if necessary." He was gone in a moment.

The parade was filled with men, half dressed soldiers coming from the huts, sick and wounded from the hospital, all running helter skelter. Roget rallied those with arms and hurried with them to the east gate where he heard the battle cry of the Spaniards: "Santiago—down with the heretics." There he found several of the enemy had gained entrance, how, he could not imagine, but it was no time to surmise. Barthomew was beside him with his pike, they rushed upon the invaders and made short work of the few, but one slipped by them without their knowing.

Now La Vigne and Baillot had joined him. Roget sent La Vigne with a half dozen men to guard the breach on the north, and Baillot with the arquebusiers, of which there were a few, to the ramparts. Just as he had issued these commands he heard a cry from the guard at the main gate, a Spaniard was attacking him from within the fort. Before Roget and his companions could reach the spot the Spaniard had struck down the guard and was attempting to open the gate to admit the others. Roget felled him with a blow, but not before he had unloosed the bars, the mass fell against the outside and the horde rushed in. There was no chance for the dozen against hundreds and they retreated across the parade fighting every step.

"You were right, Louis, God forgive me." Roget heard a voice beside him. It was Laudonniere, pale of face, bare-headed with shirt collar open exposing the scraggy outline of the sinews in his emaciated neck, almost staggering but wielded his sword with telling effect. Others of the Frenchmen had obtained their arms and joined them and the thin wall moved slowly backward, Baillot's arquebusiers helping them with a grilling cross fire from the ramparts. Roget noticed that the Spaniards had not fired a gun and wondered, but was glad, for it would have meant short work of the little band.

"Where are the women? We must protect them." Lau-

donniere shouted.

"I have sent Charnay to bring them to the north breach. We will get them to the ships." Roget replied.

"You go—get them aboard," Laudonniere commanded. "We will hold the line as long as possible."

"Stand by the Commander, Bartholomew," Roget shouted as he slipped away.

"I will sir," he heard him reply.

Fortunately the breach was just behind the women's house on the north, and hidden from the view. The Spaniards had attacked from the south and gained entrance through the east and west gates. They had evidently paid no attention to the north side of the fort as the high water had formed a barrier on that side. This was very fortunate, as was the fact that the breach there had not been closed, as it offered a way of escape. Charnay had done his work well, the women and children were huddled together at the opening and he was patiently waiting for orders with Adele and Cleone beside him. La Vigne and his men were standing guard.

"Have your men rip those boards from the wash house and make a bridge across that trench." Roget shouted to La Vigne. It was done in a hurry. "Now get these women and children across. You men guide them along the embankment to the shallops. Keep them in line. You, La Vigne take command of the loading, I will look after this end. There should be more boats from the brigantines coming over. Hurry along," he said to the women and rapidly they passed safely through the breach, as the shouting and noise of battle grew louder.

The last of the women were just going through. He looked around for Adele to tell her goodbye. She was nowhere in sight.

"Where is Adele?" he shouted to Cleone.

The girl looked about her in bewilderment. "She was here

only a moment ago."

Charnay also thought she was by his side.

"Has she gone through?" Roget asked.

"No, I am sure she hasn't." Cleone replied.

"No, she has not gone through, I am positive," Charnay asserted.

"She has gone after my child," wailed a woman with a babe in her arms who had been holding back.

"Where?" cried Roget, distractedly.

"In there," pointing to the women's house.

Roget made the house in three bounds and up the steps into the hall crying, "Adele."

He received an answer from the far end of the building and as he rushed down the hall met her coming out of a room with a crippled child in her arms. He could hear the noise of fighting outside the door, only a few feet away.

He took the child from her. "Get out of here," he cried, urging her ahead of him as he tenderly carried the child.

"I could not leave the little crippled fellow," she said to him, as if apologizing.

He gave the child to one of La Vigne's men and sent the mother and babe through with him. They were the last save Adele and Cleone.

"You go with them, Charnay," Roget said, pushing him forward. "I will join you if I can, if not goodbye. Look after Adele just as I promised Alphonse I would, Charnay."

"But why can't you come with us?" Charnay asked.

"I can't, old fellow, Rene Laudonniere and his men are back there. I can't leave them."

"But you must come," Adele said, looking at him with blanched face, "you must not go back."

He took her gently by the hand and led her to the opening. "No! Adele, my duty is here. I cannot leave Laudonniere, I must go back. I hope to join you on the ship. If not, good-

bye, God bless and keep you." He turned to Charnay, "Hurry, Charnay, you have no time to lose." He urged them through the opening, Charnay leading each of the women by the hand, Adele half turned, her face streaming with tears, her eyes lingering on his as she passed out of his sight.

Swallowing a great gulp that seemed almost to strangle him, he rushed past the women's house and into the parade. The French lines were breaking, the Spaniards had succeeded in silencing the fire of Baillot's arquebusiers on the rampart and unsupported by them the Spaniards were charging across the inclosure with pike and halberd, shouting "Santiago, down with the heretics." The fighting was centered around Laudonniere who had retreated to a line between the officers' quarters and the women's house where two small tents were standing. The rain had suddenly ceased as if the elements held its breath in awe at the brave stand of the little group.

Roget rushed into the melee beside Laudonniere and Bartholomew. Blood streamed from a cut in the commander's cheek and Bartholomew was bleeding from a scalp wound, but his pike was still doing noble work.

"To the breach," Roget shouted to Laudonniere, "Escape while you can, Bartholome stand by the commander, I will try to hold them."

At that moment he heard a familiar voice in Spanish shout: "There he is, the captain of the heretics." He looked and saw Prevatt standing beside a bearded Spaniard in complete armor.

Laudonniere saw Prevatt also, and made at him, crying: "Thou traitor, may I live but to slay thee." But the Spanish officer thrust Prevatt aside and interposed his mail form.

Roget knew that Laudonniere would be no match for the Spaniard so accoutered. Throwing himself between them he engaged the officer, shouting to Laudonniere: "Go, Rene, make your escape. I will join you in a moment."

Menendez, for it was he, would have been no match for the skillful French swordsman, but Roget could find no point in the coat of mail where his sword could pierce. He knew that to remain longer was certain death and only the eagerness of the Spaniards to follow the fleeing Frenchmen had saved him thus far. He saw others coming to the rescue of the officer and he hastily turned and followed, Laudonniere and Batholomew around the tent. He could see them making for the breach and he followed them, while the Spaniards as if cheated raised a hue and cry behind him. But he knew the lay of the land and they, fearing an ambushade went more carefully.

He was about to follow Laudonniere through the opening in the breach when he heard his name called and turning saw Adele Darboux standing in the door of the women's house. She came to meet him as he rushed to her. "Mon Dieu, Adele, why did you return?" he cried in agony.

"I prefer to die with you than to live without you," she said calmly. He stood spellbound for a moment, not believing his ears. Then he looked into her eyes and he knew. He caught her in his arms for one breathless moment.

A shout behind awakened him to their danger. "Come, we will be trapped." But it was too late, a half dozen Spaniards guarded the opening in the breach.

"To the small postern! We may be able to get through the trench," he said pulling her after him. They followed the rampart to the east beside the powder magazine, but again he saw he was cut off. Spaniards were following the fleeing Frenchmen, hacking them down as they ran. They seemed everywhere. Those at the breach had seen him and were after them shouting. Every avenue of escape seemed closed. He could have scaled the rampart if he had been alone, but to attempt to get Adele over would mean their certain destruction.

She saw the dilemma, and pressed close to him. "We can

die together, Louis," she murmured.

But life was sweet to Roget now, he did not wish to die. He noticed the door of the powder house was open. It was their only chance. Slipping his arm about her waist he raised her bodily and sprang through the door, slamming it as he entered. Quickly rolling a keg of powder against it, and then another, he propped it with a heavy beam, which he braced against the opposite wall.

"There," he said, panting from his exertion, "it will take a catapult to open that door."

A sudden shower drowned the sounds on the outside. Through a small window, high above their heads, a dim light fell upon her face as she looked up to him. She threw her arms about his neck and covered his face with kisses. "Oh, Louis, I love you so."

He held her face between his hands kissing her eyes and mouth, "At last, beloved, you are mine," he said passionately. The torrent resounded with a hollow roar in the logged enclosure. They had to speak with their mouths close to the ear.

"You thought I love Charles Verdier, didn't you, Louis?" She finally said, nestling even closer to him.

"Yes, but now I know I was wrong, dear one."

"Charles knew, too. I told him the night in the woods after the quarrel."

"But you are mine, now, forever and forever, aren't you Adele?"

"Yes, Louis, I am yours, forever and forever."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE OATH

The sudden cessation of the shower brought Louis Roget and Adele Darboux back to a realization of the dangers that beset them, for the noise of the rain was succeeded by other sounds which told them that the Spaniards were trying to effect an entrance into the powder house. Against the door some heavy object was hurled with a crash that resounded like thunder in the log hewn room with its low pitched roof. The door shivered but held and again the crash came. Adele covered her ears to keep out the deafening sound.

Through the small crevices between the logs they could distinctly hear the words spoken by those on the outside, which Adele, being ignorant of the Spanish language could not understand, but Roget knew quite well what they meant. Prevatt was explaining to someone that this was the powder house and should contain a goodly supply of ammunition. The one addressed, evidently in authority, stormed at those who rammed the door urging them to hurry in order that the cannon on the rampart might be loaded and trained on the brigantines in the river.

"Over a third of the heretics have escaped to the ships," he fumed.

"Give me dry powder and I will blow them to hell!" said another.

"We'll have it for you," said a third, and another crash shook the building.

But the door held for the beam propped against the opposite

wall gave just enough under the compact to take up the force of the blow.

"It must be barred on the inside," said the third voice, after several unsuccessful attempts.

"There is some one inside, I told you that in the first place," growled an entirely new voice.

"Yes, I saw them go in, there are two of them, a man and a woman," spoke still another.

There was a pause and the stern voice evidently of the officer in authority whom Roget thought must be Pedro Menendez, spoke out, "Open that door, you accursed heretic, or we will burn you alive."

Roget did not mind that for himself, he had faced too many dangers in his life and was unafraid. He was familiar with the mode of warfare carried on in the religious strifes in France, the cruelties practiced by the bigoted adherents on both sides, and doubted not the words of the Spaniard to burn. Under different conditions he would have fought his way out facing almost certain death with the knowledge that the enemy would pay dearly should he fall, but now another life was at stake, a life which meant more to him than his own. And he wanted to live. A great tragedy had brought him a great love—that for which his heart so ardently longed and which he thought could never be his—had come to him in the twinkling of an eye. In the face of death the souls of two beings had been bared and joined. Should his happiness be so fleeting, should the earthly paradise opened unto him so quickly be quickly closed?

He did not doubt the threat of the Spaniard to burn them alive. Had he not seen his angel mother burned at the stake by these very people? Would it now be his fate to see the only other woman he had ever loved meet the same fate? But if it were to be so, why should he not, like Sampson of old, destroy his enemies with him. He had the match, there was the

powder—enough to blow Fort Caroline and all the Spaniards off the face of the earth—the proud Adelentado, his captains, Prevatt, all would go with him, at one fell blow he could destroy them and avenge the death of his sainted mother. Yes, better this, a thousand times better than to be captured and made suffer by the cruel Dons.

He smiled grimly as the idea developed in his brain. He caught Adele in his arms and held her close to him, quickly telling her of his plans. She looked up into his face calmly, serenely, "It will be as you say, Louis, my love," she breathed, "where thou goest, I will go, where thou diest I will die."

But as he looked into her wondrous eyes and felt her warm kisses on his lips, the desire to live was too great, there stirred within his soul the age old cry to love, to love, and to love there must be life.

Another thought seized him, if he could only exchange his life for theirs. If Menendez would only give them their freedom and safe conduct to the ship, well and good, but if he refused, then it was time to make his funeral pyre.

The voices outside became more violent, threats piled upon threats of dire punishment to those imprisoned within, the blows rained on the door but still it held. The Spaniards were desperate, Roget knew that slowly but surely the brigantines were dropping down the river every minute getting nearer to safety, out of range of the cannon of the fort, which were useless without the dry powder which could be had only in the powder house. And this was closed to them by two miserable heretics who thwarted the will of the Adelentado. They would have set fire to it and made short work of its occupants but that would destroy the very object of their endeavor. And so they fumed and raged.

Roget was now at the point that he too wished to act quickly for from the words of the Spaniards he feared that the brigantines might get so far away that he could not reach them before

they passed the bar. So he hurried to place a box beneath the small opening which faced the east side of the fort, and stood upon it so that he could obtain a view of the outside. He found that he looked out upon the eastern rampart and the wooded bluff beyond and as those who sought entrance were upon the north side of the powder house he could not see them.

But he raised his voice and called loudly through the opening, speaking in Spanish, "I would parley with the Adelentado, Don Pedro Menendez."

Instantly there was silence on the outside. Roget's voice striking against the rampart had resounded against the side of the adjacent triangle and echoed to them so that it seemed to the Spaniards a voice from the air. All looked at one another in dumb astonishment. Menendez had seen no one, yet his name had been called in a dialect very familiar to him, that of his own native province of Asturia.

"Who calls Pedro Menendez?" he shouted.

"I, Captain Louis Roget would speak to him," again came the voice, now seeming to be around the corner of the house.

In a moment a soldier came within the line of Roget's vision and the latter extended his hand to attract his attention.

"Here he is," the soldier shouted to the others, pointing to the opening above him.

In a moment an officer, whom Roget recognized as an adversary in the parade but who had now discarded his armor, stood within view and with him were two captains and Jean Prevatt.

Roget repeated, "I would parley with Don Pedro Menendez."

"I am Pedro Menendez, and who are you that speaks so fluently the dialect of the Asturians?"

"I am Captain Louis Roget. This house is filled with powder. If you continue to batter the door, I will set off the magazine, we shall all perish and the fort will be destroyed. Will you listen to me?"

"Speak on, what is it you would say?"

"If you will give my companion and me safe conduct to the ships in the river, I will open the door, otherwise I will drop a match in the powder."

"Are you Lutheran or Catholic?" Menendex demanded.

"I am of the New Religion, but I am a soldier and will sell my life in exchange for yours."

"Is your companion also a heretic?"

"She is also of the New Religion," Roget replied.

Menendez wanted dry powder and he wanted it immediately. There was no need to parley.

"Come forth," he said, "I will give you safe conduct."

Roget did not trust the word of the Spaniard. "Will you give me your solemn oath as a Christian that you will do as you say?"

"I swear it," Menendez answered promptly.

Roget descended to the floor and caught Adele in his arms. "We are saved, we are saved," he cried enthusiastically, "the Spanish Commander has promised us safe conduct to the ship."

"Then we can live?" she said eagerly.

"Yes, we can live and love," and he kissed her passionately.

A loud knocking brought him back, "Hurry and open the door," called a harsh voice.

He pulled the kegs away, removed the beam and opened the door, as soldiers hurriedly pushed by him to get the powder they so much desired. He assisted Adele to the ground and they stood before the Adelentado and his officers.

The sky had cleared and they were in the shadow of the house, but the sun fell upon the row of Spaniards and the sudden glare after the gloom of the enclosure blinded him for the moment, but when his eyes had become accustomed to the light Roget noticed that Menendez was in earnest conversation with Prevatt, and that soldiers surrounded them with drawn pikes. He looked with scorn upon Prevatt who caught his eye

and quickly looked the other way.

The soldiers were bringing the powder from the house. Menendez evidently having obtained the information he wished from Prevatt, turned to the officer next to him.

"Captain Lopez Patino, you will take the powder to the rampart, load the cannon and try to sink the ships of the heretics, though I fear they are out of range."

Roget prayed that Patino would be too late. He thought with regret that it was only yesterday that he had completed repairs to the dismantled cannon, and that if he had not done so the Spaniards could not turn them against the ships with Laudonniere and the fleeing Huguenots. It was indeed fortunate, he also thought, that the rain has prevented his loading them for had the Spaniards found them loaded, they could have immediately turned them against the ships which would have meant their certain destruction as they lay only a few hundred feet from the fort; and yet the very rain that had prevented his loading the cannon had caused Laudonniere to recall the outposts which made the surprise attack of the Spaniards possible. And now, it was his act of seeking shelter in the powder house that had delayed the Spaniards and allowed Laudonniere and the others to escape. Surely God performed wonders in a mysterious way.

Patino and the soldiers hastened to obey the orders, while the Adelentado turned to Roget.

"You wield your sword well, Captain Roget," he said, his keen eye closely studying the face of the Frenchman.

"Thanks, Senor," Roget replied affably, "but the Adelentado was too well fortified for me to give a proper exhibition."

Menendez appeared not to notice the remark, "I understand you are a Spaniard," he said, not unkindly.

"No, Senor, I am a Frenchman. It is true my mother was Spanish, but my father was a Frenchman and I was born in La Rochelle. I am a French subject."

"You speak the dialect of Asturia?"

"My mother was from Avilles, I spent much of my childhood there."

"Why are you here with the heretics fighting against the people of your mother's country?"

"I am of the New Religion, and I am only defending my home against invaders."

"We are not invaders, Captain Roget," Menendez was quick to reply. "This is the land of his Majesty King Phillip of Spain, by right of discovery. The heretics are the invaders. Although you are one of them, you are half Spaniard. Renounce this detestable creed, embrace the Catholic faith, and I will give you service under me." The tone and manner of Pedro Menendez, Adelentado of Florida, was almost pleading.

Roget spurned the suggestion and resented the tone, but he knew that for Adele's sake, he must not do or say anything which would be to their detriment. So he answered respectfully, "I thank you, noble Adelentado for your offer, but I cannot renounce the teachings which I believe to be true."

The manner of Menendez was impatient, but he continued to argue. "You are a heretic and the greatest favor I could do you would be to rescue your soul. I repeat if you will renounce the false doctrine of the Lutherans and come to the true Church I will spare your life. But all Lutherans are enemies of my King and your King."

This remark raised the first note of alarm in Roget's mind. He had heard much from Admiral Ribault of the unfriendly attitude of the French King, Charles the Ninth, toward the Huguenots and of the constant machinations of his mother, Catherine de Medici with the Duke of Alva and King Phillip of Spain to destroy them. Therefore he knew that the Spaniard under such conditions with no fear of reprisal, would have little mercy for a French Huguenot. So he was very glad that he had taken the precaution to demand the solemn

oath of Pedro Menendez as a Christian before submitting himself and his companion to his mercy. He was therefore very polite in answering.

"Most noble Adelentado, I can not renounce the teachings of my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Any proper request which is in my power to grant I will be pleased to do, but my religion is my life. In that I am only responsible to my God."

The answer seemed to anger Menendez greatly. He advanced a step and raised his hand warningly. "Do you know what you are doing, heretic. You are blaspheming the name of the Blessed Redeemer. Seize him," he said to the guard, and before Roget could raise a hand he was held by three soldiers who disarmed and bound him.

Thus they held him before the Adelentado. "Now will you recant?" he asked sternly.

"Roget threw his head back proudly, "No," he said defiantly, "I will not recant, but I will ask you as a Christian to keep your oath and give me and my companion safe conduct to my ship."

The reply made Menendez wince. "I did not promise you safe conduct to your ship," he said surily, "I promised you safe conduct, but it will be to the burning fires of Hell unless you renounce this false religion."

The Huguenot stood before the Spaniard with his hands bound so he could not move his arms, but he thrust his face as near as possible to the Adelentado's. "I will not renounce my religion because it is not false, but now I know how false is Pedro Menendez and the oath of a Spaniard."

A cannon boomed, Roget prayed it would not reach its mark.

When they had first come from the powder house, Adele had patiently waited for Roget to answer some perfunctory questions as she thought, and then to proceed to the ship. She stood by his side and her eyes ran over the row of Spaniards and finally rested on Prevatt, whom she had never seen and

was not aware of his identity. But she noticed that his eyes were fixed upon her and his expression was such as to catch her attention. Her eyes moved on, but when she looked at him again she met the same penetrating gaze. She tried to keep her glances away from him, but somehow they would wander back through curiosity and each time she found him staring at her.

When the soldiers seized Roget she was thrown roughly aside and would have fallen but Prevatt stepped forward, caught her and politely conducted her back to her place beside Roget, returning to his own place behind Menendez. Although Roget's hands were tied, she placed hers in his and pressed them gently.

Menendez noticed the movement. "What is this man to you?" he asked her sternly in French.

The question confused Adele and she halted and Roget answered for her, "she is my affianced wife."

"Yes, we are to be married," she added.

"Are you too a heretic?" Menendez inquired.

"I am of the New Religion."

"Then you should hang together." Prevatt leaned over and whispered to the Adelentado who nodded his head as if agreeing to the suggestions. Turning to Adele, Menendez continued, "no, I will spare you, we will need you at St. Augustine and the priests may convert you later." Then to Roget he went on, "choose now. If you recant, you will not only receive Life Everlasting, but the blessings of one you love in this world. If you do not, you shall hang with the rest of the heretics."

Adele looked up appealingly into Roget's face, her lips did not move but through her eyes her soul spoke—the soul of a woman thinking first of the man she loved, for love had for the moment dimmed the fire of religious zeal—and the soul of the woman plainly said unto him, "leave me not, oh my love."

And as he looked, he understood. For the moment his love strove with his faith and his religious exaltation for the mastery of his soul. In his agony, great beads of sweat stood upon his brow but he shook his head resolutely. "No, I will not recant, I will not give up my faith, Adele, I cannot."

Only for the moment did she falter, his resolution held her firm. Tears bedimmed her eyes as she said, "You are right, Louis, if we must part, we will meet again where sorrow shall be no more."

Together they kneeled in prayer as the Spaniards looked on in awe. Menendez was the first to recover. "Stop that sacrilege," he stormed and soldiers roughly jerked them to their feet.

"Put them with the rest," he ordered.

The cannon boomed twice in quick succession.

Roget and Adele were led into the centre of the parade where some thirty of the Huguenots, all securely bound, were corralled under guard. About the enclosure of the fort were the bodies of French and Spaniards lying in the hot sun.

Roget recognized most of the prisoners as the sick and wounded from the hospital who had been unable to escape on account of their infirmities. There were men whom he had led in the Indian wars against Outina the Themogoan and who being bravest had suffered most. It was a sad lot, some with bandaged limbs, others sick with fever all lying on the ground, which was soaked from the heavy rains and steaming in the broiling sun, yet all welcomed them with wan smiles recognizing their former leader and Adele as the angel who had so often comforted them in the hospital.

They were surprised, however, to see them, for all the other officers had either been killed or had escaped and all the women had reached the ships safely. Roget told them briefly of their experience, of the broken oath of the Spaniard and his refusal to accept life under the terms of renunciation of his faith.

There was a murmur of approval. "We shall all remain steadfast," spoke one and the others joined in a fervent "amen."

Another was brought bound into the circle. It was La Roche the runt, who had tried to swim to one of the brigantines but had been unable to breast the current and had been compelled to take refuge on a floating log which had been washed ashore. As the brigantines were far down the river he had decided to throw himself upon the mercy of the Spaniards, with the result that he had been bound and brought among them. Roget was greatly pleased to know that the ship had escaped the fire of the cannon.

They saw the Fleur-de-Lis hauled down and the Standard of Spain raised over the fort, they could hear the shouts of the soldiers in the forest beating the bushes looking for fugitives, soldiers passing through the parade picking out the bodies of the Spaniards for burial, the sun poured down upon them and even the Spanish guard grumbled at the heat, but they were not allowed the comfort of shade and the pleadings of the fever stricken prisoners for water remained unanswered.

Roget comforted Adele as best he could. "Let us put our trust in God," he whispered, "there may be a deliverance yet." She smiled sadly and promised to try to be brave. There was no chaplain among them and in answer to the request of one of the infirm for some one to pray, Roget volunteered, after which Adele sang Martin Luther's Hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is our God," one of the favorites of the Huguenots. The guard watched them with curiosity, some gibing them in Spanish, which only Roget understood, while others looked on in respectful silence, but the spirits of the prisoners seemed elevated by these devotions and all vowed to remain steadfast, even to La Roche the runt, who seemed to never tire of telling Roget of his repentance for the crime committed against him.

The sudden appearance of Prevatt was met with silent

scowls which however seemed not in the least to distract the traitor from his evident object of tantalizing those who were bound and helpless.

"You will all be hung within an hour," he announced with a malicious grin as he surveyed the group, pausing until his eye rested upon Roget, when he continued with a sneer, "except Mademoiselle Darboux. I have interceded for her and the Adelentado has granted my request. She will be saved for me." He bowed with mock gallantry to Adele, "I will honor Mademoiselle Darboux with my company to St. Augustine."

Adele drew back in horror as Prevatt moved toward her and Roget stepped between them struggling with the cord that bound him. "You traitor" he hissed, "touch her and I will kill you."

Prevatt laughed scornfully as he noted Roget's unavailing efforts to release his arms. "Ha, ha, Monsieur Roget speaks as if he were still in command," and as he spoke he took another step toward her.

A guard near by was watching them and while he could not understand the language he noted the belligerent attitude of Roget and caught him as he started toward Prevatt.

The traitor laughed derisively, "Ah, you see," he began, but he never finished the sentence for La Roche, the "runt," squatting on the ground near Adele, leaped like a frog and buried his bullet-shaped head into the pit of Prevatt's stomach, hurling him to the ground and completely knocking the breath from his body.

The guards snickered but no one molested La Roche who picked himself up and returned to his place, grinning with delight that he had found opportunity to even up the score with Prevatt.

None of the prisoners had noticed a tall black figure wearing the mantle of a Dominican friar which had approached and

stood near by. The priest had witnessed the scene and Prevatt, lying prostrate, gasping for breath, caught the cold cynical smile of Father Salvandi as the deep set black eyes looked down upon him.

"Monsieur El Capitan does not seem to find favor in the sight of his own countrymen," the priest said in excellent French, and turning to Adele he bowed courteously and continued in the same language, "I regret that I must apologize to Mademoiselle for the conduct of one who happens to be with us but is not one of us."

Prevatt arose with difficulty and tried to slink away, but the arrival of Menendez forced him to remain for the Adelentado beckoned him to his side. Quite crestfallen the traitor appeared as he stood glaring at La Roche who returned his gaze with a sardonic grin.

Menendez looked upon the prisoners who stood waiting in grim silence. "Are there any among you who will renounce the heresy of Luther and come into the fold of the true church?" Father Salvandi lifted the crucifix and the Huguenots looked from one to another but none spoke. Menendez waited patiently for a moment in which even the guards stood like statues. "Be warned," he repeated, "recant and embrace the true faith or you die by the halter."

Roget stepped forward, his eyes blazing, the scar on his cheek a livid red. He spoke in Spanish, "Pedro Menendez," he said, "Tyrant as you are, a demon of Hell seeking the lives of innocent victims, we flaunt into your face our scorn at your proposal. Attacking a people with whom your country is at peace, you have captured our fort and you hold our mortal bodies in bondage, but our souls belong to God. We will have naught to do with you or Rome. As we have lived in our Lord's teaching, we will die faithful to them. Justice we ask of you as soldiers, but mercy we know we need not expect from him who knows not the meaning of the word. Lead on to

death of the body, oh tyrant. We will die, and dying commend our souls to God and following the teachings of our Blessed Redeemer ask his forgiveness for your benighted soul, whose cruelties are but the spumes of Hell."

As he ended an intense silence pervaded the group gathered in the centre of the parade, the prisoners not understanding the words but from Roget's manner guessing their import. The Spaniards, hardly breathing as they waited expectantly for the effect upon the Adelentado. Father Salvandi's eyes were glued upon the face of Roget, the cynical smile of the Dominican was gone and his gaunt, pale face was set like marble in its immobility. The effect of the words were lost upon him, but that face, glowing with religious zeal had brought back the priest, whom they thanked for his gentleness but through memories of long ago, memories that he thought were dead, but thirty years of sack cloth had failed to kill.

Menendez's impassive face moved not a muscle but he looked steadily at Roget, and finally when he spoke his voice was calm, not a note of passion could be detected. "It is well," he said, "within an hour your soul will be boiling in those spumes of hell from which you say my cruelty comes. Your punishment shall be a warning to all heretics and to invaders of the realm of the King of Spain." He turned to the captain of the guard. "Prepare the halters on one of the trees outside the fort and place thereon this inscription: 'Not as to Frenchmen, but as to Heretics and enemies of God.'"

The captain saluted and began his gruesome duty of counting the prisoners, as Menendez addressed Father Salvandi, "The woman will be spared, and if there be any of the men who recant, you can advise me." He then retired with some of his officers to the quarters formerly occupied by Ribault, while Prevatt followed along but remained outside the door.

Father Salvandi asked each one to recant, offering the consolation of the Church which all declined, not in anger toward

loyalty to their own faith. Adele leaned on Roget as if she would fall, and he placed his arms about her and held her to him, "have courage," he whispered, "it must be as God intended. Be brave, my love, and endure to the end."

"But surely," she sobbed, "God can not intend to give us this great love and then part us forever." There was a note of defiance in her voice, her faith was being severely tested.

"Not forever," Roget consoled, "we will meet again over there."

Father Salvandi looked upon them compassionately, "Is there anything I could do for you, my son?" he asked in French laying his hand gently upon Roget's shoulder.

"No, Monsieur," Roget replied, "I can think of nothing."

"I wish that I could," the priest urged, "somehow, your face awakens memories I thought were dead, I know it is merely a coincidence, but you remind me of one I loved. For her sake I would help you if I could."

Roget looked at him sharply. He caught the cold gleam of the eye, the hardness of the mouth, it was the face of a bigot but sincerity was written there. "Yes, Monsieur, since you have spoken I will ask your aid. We are not of the same faith but we worship the same God. In His name I would ask your protection for this young woman who will be left alone. You apologized to her for the insult of the traitor, Prevatt. Will you protect her from him?"

"I will, my son, that do I promise. Monsieur Prevatt shall not harm her." And he turned to Adele, "my daughter, remember that Father Salvandi will always be your friend and protector."

Adele murmured her thanks and Roget grasped the priest's hand warmly. "The blessings of Heaven be upon you," he said fervently.

"It is time to go now," said the Dominican, as Menendez could be seen crossing the parade. "My daughter, perhaps it is

better that you should not go with them," he said softly to Adele.

"Oh no," she sobbed, "I will not leave him," and as the order of march was given she raised her head and said firmly, "I shall remain with him to the end."

But as they went toward the west gate of the fort it was necessary for Roget and the priest to support her as she walked. A guard was beside each prisoner many of whom were so weak they had to be assisted. Two by two they went, on through the gate, through which so often before they had gone to the little chapel to thank God for the religious freedom which they enjoyed. There was not a sound save the measured tread of feet or the occasional exclamation of a guard urging the weaker ones on.

They could see the halters suspended from the limbs of a giant oak which stood near the edge of the forest. Long streamers of gray moss, hanging from the limbs, moved in the breeze in unison with the swaying ropes and drops fell from the rain soaked lichen as if the giant of the forest wept for the victims of the tragedy to be enacted.

Beneath the tree, the Adelentado stood with his captains and Prevatt behind him. The line was guided by the guards so that each prisoner stood beside a noose, Roget's place being by one suspended near the trunk of the tree close by the Adelentado.

When Adele raised her eyes and beheld the halter hanging so close to Roget's head, she uttered a piercing scream and threw herself upon him. "Oh my love, you must not," she cried, "you must not leave me. Recant, recant, I cannot live without you. Tell them you will recant."

For a moment Roget seemed to falter, then he raised his head proudly, tenderly disengaging her hands that were clinging about his neck, and said in a firm voice, "No Adele, I can-

not. It would be a lie. Goodbye, my love." But she still tried to cling to him.

The guards were arranging the halters around the necks of the others while the one beside Roget was patiently waiting. Menendez noticed this and harshly ordered him to proceed with the execution. As he stepped forward to adjust the halter, Father Salvandi gently took Adele by the arms to lead her aside, but she jerked away from him and threw herself at Menendez's feet, "Give me his life," she cried with hands upraised to him, "I will recant, I will be a Catholic, only let him live . . ." and she fell in a swoon upon the ground.

Prevatt stepped forward as if to lift her up, but Father Salvandi with two strides was beside her and roughly pushing Prevatt aside gathered her in his arms and bore her away to the fort.

"Let the Will of God be done," Menendez exclaimed signing the executioners to proceed.

A guard stood at the end of each rope which was thrown over a limb with all the halters adjusted save Roget's. Now he could feel the rough cord as it scraped his neck and saw the guard grasp the other end. He heard the captain of the guard give the signal to pull, he uttered a prayer, the rope tightened about his neck, his muscles strained and his feet were lifted from the ground as a choking sensation almost overpowered him. Then it seemed as if something snapped and he sank down, down, into the depths of oblivion.

In fact scarcely had his feet left the ground and the rope become taut, when it parted and he fell limp and apparently lifeless, while the guard at the other end sprawled full length as, relieved of its weight, the rope flew over the limb.

Simultaneously an arrow buried itself in the body of the oak just above the head of the Adelentado.

CHAPTER XIX

A VOICE IN THE NIGHT

Olata, son of Satouriana, mighty chief of the Tumucuaus, was sorely distressed. For days he had wished to visit his white brother whom he had not seen since he had watched his receding figure fighting its way waist deep in water through the tangled palmetto scrub. But since that day the Great Spirit had continued to send His rain, flooding the flat woods, overflowing the streams and covering the fields of maize. Not even his father, Satouriana, or for that matter the oldest juava, who had seen Satouriana's grandfather pass to the happy hunting ground, had ever known anything like this flood. The High Priest of the tribe had said that it was the curse of the Great Spirit for the evil deeds done in the world.

Satouriana had sent Tolita and the other runners throughout his domain to see how the people fared and was pleased to learn that there was no loss of life, and though the fields of maize in the low lands were ruined those in the high ground were safe and as the deer and bear had been driven to the hillocks there would be meat in plenty. So the Tumucuaus would not starve. But few of the Indians went abroad during these rainy days, and Satouriana needed Olata at Saturiba for there was much to do in attending to the repairing of damages done, so that Olata had not been able to visit Fort Caroline and was, therefore, exceedingly restless.

Little had been heard from Selooe. Coacoochee had cast the arrow at the feet of the white cacique, meaning war, much against the wishes of Ucita, who was willing to give up his

village and take his people to the forest. The storm, however, had driven him to the village of Palao, two leagues to the south of Seloee, for refuge and nothing further had been done as to waging war. Olata had hoped to be able to visit Seloee himself and learn what he could for his white brother who he knew feared that the white cacique would attack him.

On the seventh day following Roget's departure from Saturiba, Indians coming from the setting sun had brought the news that a half day's journey away they had crossed the trail of many white men going north, and that the sun had only shone for a short time upon the newly cut trees which marked the way. Olata knew that they had passed within two days and he was much concerned as to whom they might be.

Were they enemies of his white brother from Seloee? The white cacique must be a very brave man to attempt a journey through the woods and swamps in such weather. It might be the great white father returning, but he would have come in his great ships or if by land he would have passed by Saturiba, the home of his friends. It could not be his white brother himself, and his people, for they would not be going in that direction. Who else could it be but the white cacique with his thunder? And was his mission a peaceful one? Olata did not think so.

It was late in the afternoon, darkness had already begun to settle when he heard the news, and the rain clouds, which in the morning had gone away, now seemed to compensate for their short vacation. But Olata had noted signs of clearing weather and believing that the storm was almost over, determined to set out at daybreak to visit Fort Caroline.

So he announced his decision to Satouriana and early sought the bear skin on the floor of the hut near the mighty cacique himself. Hours afterward, when his lithe young body, fully supplied with refreshing sleep, began to stretch

limb and muscle as if seeking surcease of slumber, there came to him a vision of his mother, who gently stroked his forehead and kissed his lips.

Instantly he was awake, but he was not afraid, for he knew it was she as her spirit came often to him, sometimes in the winds, sometimes in the fragrance of the flower and again in the still small hours of the night. As she spoke to him her voice was soft, yet clear and distinct, and in it there was a note of intense concern. "Olata, my son," she said, "your white brother is in great danger; go unto him and tarry not."

He called "mother." He would speak with her further but she was gone. All was darkness in the hut and the only sound was the snoring of the sleeping cacique and the noise of the rain. But Olata felt his way to the corner where lay his bow and quiver—his hunting knife which his white brother had given him and his tomahawk had been beside him—and then out through the council house he crept onto the stone step to the level ground. There was not a sign of life in the village. To the arbor where the food was kept he went, and finding a strip of dried deer meat he cut a portion which he ate. With a gourd he obtained water from a covered urn and then proceeded down the lane to the place where his canoe was tied.

He knew that it was nearly dawn—for sufficient sleep had rested him—and but for the clouds the first streak of red could be seen in the east. He would have waited, but the words of his mother urged him on. The canoe moved slowly through the blackness and the rain, for even the outline of the trees along the banks of the creek was so faint that there was no mark for him, the nose of his canoe continually sticking into the bushes over which the flood had risen. Impatiently he would back away and start again only to have another suddenly rise before him.

The light of day slowly came, but with it was a mist from

the sea and out in the open waters of the bayou there was no sign to guide him save that which his own intuition gave. The rain drove heavily in his face, but the rippling water, as he bent to his paddle, seemed to repeat his mother's words, "go unto him and tarry not."

The sun was high in the heavens and the clouds had all dispersed when he drove his canoe into the palmetto scrub where the trail once ran, but the flood water was too deep here to disembark and he pulled on, striking, scraping the saw like leaves as the stroke of his paddle carried the canoe from side to side of the narrow opening of the trail.

Suddenly he heard a loud report, like thunder, he held his paddle poised, it was not thunder he knew, it was one of the big guns like those he had heard on the ships of the great white father, and the sound came from where his white brother stayed. Desperately he sprang into the turbid water, leaving his canoe to lay among the palmettoes and with bow and arrow raised above his head he pushed on through water up to his arm pits. But soon it was shallower and the edge of the flood was near. Again he heard the booming twice in quick succession.

It did not take him long, swift runner as he was, to reach the top of the slope and swing on down the trail that led through the forest, across the bluff. As he neared the edge of the hill where the trail ran down to the fort, there came a warning of caution, it was an impulse, which he accredited to the spirit of his mother as he did all influences of his subconscious mind. He turned from the trail and proceeded rapidly through the woods with eyes and ears alert. Soon he heard voices and the sound of crashing in the brush, he circled the point and saw strange men, not friends of his white brother, who were beating the undergrowth as they marched. What did it all mean?

Through an opening in the trees his sharp eye caught sight

of the flag which waved over the fort and he stood still in amazement, for it was not the flag his white brother loved so well. It had not the flowers in the field of blue, the story of which had been told to him so often, how the flowers were the lilies of France and one of them had grown in the crown of a great queen. Instead there now waved a large banner of bright colors, red and yellow, with fringe and tassel flopping lazily in the breeze. He had never seen this one before—it was all very strange and unreal.

Oлата was sorely troubled. His mind reverted to the Indians' account of the trail leading northward. Had the enemy arrived and captured the fort? Where was his white brother? He surely was not dead or the spirit of his mother would have told him.

His impulse was to move to the south and encircle the fort, he would climb a tall tree and from it he could obtain a good view of the interior and possibly learn something in that way. Again as he neared an opening close to the fort which was the place he sought, he heard voices and approached cautiously, but the words were in a language strange to him. They were not his white brother's people. He came nearer, slipping from tree to tree, not a twig cracking until at last he was within a hundred feet.

He saw the ropes and the nooses and those with hands and arms bound who stood beneath them. He knew the meaning of this and his savage mind was keenly alert with interest, for his white brother had allowed him to witness such another scene in the fort, but there was only one man to hang then. His white brother had explained that it was the way the white man punished another for killing one of his own tribe, that the Great Spirit had so ordered. So all these were guilty he thought and now they must die. There was a squaw and a man with a long black coat, they were there also to watch. He was glad he happened along to see it, but he must not lose

much time, for he must find his white brother.

Thus did Olata reason, as he stationed himself behind a clump of palmetto scrub where he knew he could not be seen and would have a good view of the execution. Then he heard the woman scream and saw her throw herself upon the ground. There was something familiar in the sound of that voice. Where had he heard it? His white sister's! Now he knew. He pushed aside the leaves of palmetto and strained his eyes. Who was the man she was just speaking to? As he noted him carefully, he recognized his white brother, the rope was about his neck.

So his white brother was to be killed, because he, too, had slain one of his tribe. But that made no difference to Olata, he was here to save him. That was why his mother had sent him.

He saw the rope tighten and he knew it killed. Oh, that he could cut that rope with his hunting knife, but it was too far away. By the time he reached his side his white brother would be dead. No, only his arrow could reach it now. Snatching one from his quiver he quickly adjusted it as he sprang from behind the scrub.

That the arrow would go straight he did not doubt, but Olata did silently pray that the rope would remain taut for a second and would not sway. The thong twanged and the arrow sped, cutting the rope in twain.

Scarcely had the arrow left the bow when he, too, was on his way. He fell upon his knees besides Roget's body unloosed the noose with its scraggly end, taking the head in his arms and crooning over it like a mother over a baby. "Speak to Olata," he said in a low guttural tone.

Roget opened his eyes and looked up into the face of the Indian, and while he was dazed and all semblance of time and place had been lost to him he recognized his friend and smiled. "Ah, Olata, you have been away a long time," he whispered.

"Tell, Olata if you are hurt." murmured the Indian.

The suggestion seemed to bring to Roget's sense the aching neck and he groaned as he tried to reach it with his hands. Olata lifted him and cut the cords that bound his arms.

Then he gently rubbed the injured neck as Roget sat with his head buried in his hands, and as the Indian administered to the white man the two conversed in the language of the Tumucuanas as if entirely unmindful of the presence of others.

Every halter save Roget's had held its weight and they now swung freely, the twitching bodies thereon being mute, but gruesome evidences of the tragedy, but its denouement had so astounded Menendez and his company that they stood spell-bound, many thinking that a miracle had been performed.

The Adelentado was the first to recover from his surprise, which was succeeded by curiosity as he watched the actions of the savage and heard him and the heretic conversing in the Indian language. He turned to Prevatt who stood behind him.

"Do you know that Indian?" he asked.

"Yes, it is Olata son of Satouriana, the cacique of the Tumucuanas."

The guard who had fallen when the rope was cut by the arrow had by this time regained his bearing, and believing that the rope had broken and that he was expected to complete the task assigned to him returned to his duty. He made a new noose out of the end of the rope and advanced to Roget to finish the execution. He looked suspiciously at the Indian, whose presence he did not understand, but the fear of Menendez was uppermost in his mind. He roughly caught Roget's arm and curtly commanded him to get up. It was the first time that Olata had noticed the guard, but when he saw the outstretched hand and the halter his only thought was the defense of his white brother. As quick as a flash his knife was buried in the heart of the Spaniard.

The guard fell dead as the savage sprang to his feet and with tomahawk and knife upraised stood astride the body of Roget, defying his enemies like a wild animal defending its mate.

Instantly the company was in an uproar. The guards ran for their pikes which had been laid aside during the execution, for none dared attack the savage unarmed.

Menendez had been questioning Prevatt closely as to the relation between Roget and Olata, and the former's knowledge of the Indian language. The renegade had replied truthfully, evidently much against his will, and the Adelentado had immediately realized the value of Roget as an interpreter and as a friend of the son of the most powerful chieftan in all the surrounding country.

Since Menendez had first landed in Florida an interpreter had been his greatest need. His expedition had set out from Spain with three main ideas: A crusade against the heretics, colonization and the conversion of the savages to the Catholic religion. He knew that his work would be greatly simplified if he and the savage chief could each understand the meaning of the other. He felt that already he had become involved in a war with him for lack of understanding. He needed Roget, he would spare him and exchange his life for his services. The fellow was half Spaniard anyway, and a brave one at that. True, he was a heretic, but there would be a time enough to hang him later, if he chose. These thoughts were flashing through the subtle brain of Pedro Menendez as he turned from Prevatt, just in time to see the guard fall, and the others preparing to rush upon the Indian to avenge the death of their comrade.

Menendez's first thought was of the calamities which would befall them if this Indian, the son of Satouriana, should come to harm at his hands. He understood that the fighting strength

of the tribe of Tumucuan was no less than five thousand warriors.

"Hold!" he cried, rushing between the guards and the Indian. Instantly every soldier halted, every pike was held at rest.

"I am the one to give orders here," he thundered. "Take the body of the guard and prepare it for burial."

There was murmuring among the soldiers which Menendez heard and said to them: "You may regard it strange that I do not punish this savage with death, but for our own safety it is well that I do not. He is the son of the Savage King of all this region whose friendship we are very much in need of. So I say unto you guard well that you do not harm him."

"Patina," he ordered, "take this man," pointing to Roget, "to the quarters formerly occupied by him in the fort. Have the doctor attend him and don't let him escape. Allow the Indian to stay with him and see that the savage is not harmed."

But Patino's task was a more difficult one than Menendez anticipated. Olata stood guard and would let no one approach, so the Adelentado was forced to speak with Roget as he sat on the ground with Olata standing by his side.

"Captain Roget," Menendez called, "I have a proposal to make."

"Speak," Roget replied without looking up.

"Your life has been saved as by a miracle. Your companions now hang to the limbs of this tree, you are in my power and I could order your execution, but I am willing to spare your life on the condition that you will serve me as interpreter among the Indians."

"Roget raised his head and looked scornfully at the Adelentado. "Of what value is the word of Pedro Menendez?"

The Spaniard shrugged his shoulders. "Suppose you don't believe me, your condition can be no worse than it is now, I spare your life because it is of value to me, otherwise your

body would now be hanging there with the rest. I have just learned that you have knowledge that is useful, if you will use that knowledge for my benefit I will protect you, even if you are a heretic. If you do not accept my offer you will hang. But you will accept, not only for your own sake, but for that of the woman whom you love and who loves you."

Menendez knew that the reference to Adele would have its effect upon Roget and he was right. Should he sacrifice his life now, when the issue for which he stood was not at stake? It was duty to live, even if he would be compelled to serve the hated Spaniard, besides one never knew what the future might have in store. Thus Roget argued to himself.

"I will accept your offer," he said simply.

Menendez appeared greatly pleased, "It is well, Captain Patino will take you to your old quarters where you will have medical attention and be allowed to rest. You will be under guard, but the Indian may remain with you and I will come at a convenient season and arrange an agreement."

"You would accept the word of a heretic," Roget remarked cynically.

"In this case, yes," was Menendez's ready reply.

When Roget informed Olata that his life would be spared the Indian displayed no emotion, nor would he allow any of the others to assist him with the Frenchman. As they returned to the fort he walked by Roget's side supporting him with his left arm, while in his right hand he carried his hunting knife ready for instant use. Menendez and the others followed them, leaving the oak with its warning sign to all heretics.

The slowly drying mass ceased its weeping, but the halters continued to sway with their heavy weights, though each day the weights grew less and the atmosphere was the only sepulchre and the moaning winds the only requiem for the victims of the tragedy enacted in the name of the Lowly Nazarene.

CHAPTER XX

THE CONVERT

Pedro Menendez comfortably seated himself in the chair so often occupied by Jean Ribault in the former quarters of the French Admiral, and smiled complacently as he wondered what his enemies at the Court of King Phillip would say if they knew of his accomplishments in Florida during the short period since his landing. And he thought how well his deeds would please his Majesty, himself, for he knew that Phillip was only loyal where success crowned the efforts of his subjects. One of the objects of his expedition, the expulsion of the heretics from Florida, had already been accomplished. In addition, the foundation of his colony was laid and the conversion of the savages should rapidly progress with an interpreter who could cement friendly relations with them.

Menendez secretly admired Louis Roget, but apologized to himself for his admiration by the admission that the heretic was half Spaniard, with the blood of Asturia his own native province, flowing in his veins. He despised Jean Prevatt because he was a Frenchman, yet he persisted in defending him to himself because he was a Catholic and had done real service for the cause. Both of the men, however, he considered only tools in his hands for the further glory of Spain and the Church.

As he was turning these things over in his mind there was a light tap on the door and to his summons it opened and the form of Father Salvandi filled the doorway. Menendez marked the sad countenance and absence of the usual smile,

as he arose and welcomed the priest, who, however, did not take the proffered seat.

"I come to ask a favor of the Adelentado," he said solemnly.

"Speak, reverend father," Menendez commanded, also remaining standing.

"I would ask a privilege for the young woman. She is sorely distressed and I confess that my heart has been moved with compassion. Her request is simple and I would that you might grant it. It is only that she may be allowed the body of her lover that she may bury it."

The Adelentado had overlooked the fact that Father Salvandi had not been apprised of the happenings subsequent to his departure with Adele from the scene of the execution. "Ah, you did not know that the heretic, Roget, was not executed with the others."

Father Salvandi's face lighted perceptibly. "Then you have spared his life."

"Yes."

"I commend your act, Adelentado. The offer of the young woman to recant was in my opinion sufficient to warrant it."

"The offer of the young woman to recant . . ." Menendez began in surprise, but halted with the sentence unfinished, for an idea had suddenly illuminated his brain, an idea with far-reaching possibilities. Why not accept the innocent suggestion of the priest and require the young woman's renunciation? It would probably lead to the conversion of Roget. That would be a great stroke, the addition of a strong heart as well as a strong arm to his cause, he liked the fidelity and loyalty which Roget displayed. So the Adelentado changed his tone to one of apparent nonchalance as he completed the sentence with the words: "Yes, I also thought that was sufficient," and adding with more gravity: "And I am well pleased that my act meets with your approval."

"I will hasten to bear the good news to Adele," Father Salvandi exclaimed, as he started toward the door.

"Before you go, Father, I would speak with you further," Menendez said, holding out a restraining hand.

The priest waited expectantly.

"You understand," continued Menendez, "that the young woman, Adele, I believe is her name . . ."

"Yes, Adele Darboux."

"You understand Senorita Darboux agreed to embrace the Catholic faith."

The priest thought for an instant, "Yes, she said if you would let him live. I believe those were her exact words."

"Spoken voluntarily," Menendez added.

"Yes, spoken voluntarily," replied the Dominican, wondering where it was all leading.

"Has she made further confession?"

"No," replied Father Salvandi thoughtfully, "she really has not had the opportunity, she has been prostrated with grief. In fact, she did not know that Roget was alive."

"That is true, but now she will know and she will recant."

"I am sure that she will not only keep her word, but she will be very grateful to you."

"Sometimes these heretics are slow to conform after they have attained their ends." Menendez observed doubtfully.

The Adelentado's methods were often too abstruse even for the astute Dominican." What incentive would she have for refusing," he questioned. "Her lover's life is in your hands, he could be hanged any time."

"I do not want to hang him," Menendez admitted, "I have just learned that he possesses knowledge of value to me. He speaks the language of the savages and besides has great influence with them. I will need him in negotiating with the Indians, you and Father Mendoza will need him in proselyting. We can win him through her. If she will not recant volun-

tarily we must force her."

"But if she refuses you will be unable to compel her through threats of destroying him."

"Of course we can threaten," Menendez said blandly.

"I see, but you would not execute the threat," the Dominican observed, the cynical smile returning.

"Your observation is correct."

"Then what will you do if she refuses?" asked the priest.

"That is what I wish to discuss with you, won't you sit down?" The priest took a seat across the table as the Adelentado resumed his, "In my opinion she will not refuse," Menendez went on. "Her promise and the fear of his death will require her to recant, but there is a deeper significance to it all. I want more than her renunciation, I want to use her to win Roget to the Church and I am sure that it cannot be done if he knows that she has recanted to save him. He will not allow it. I think I know the type of man he is; he would die before he would let the woman he loves give up her religion to save his life."

Father Salvandi nodded his head in acquiescence. "I agree with you, there," he murmured.

"We must persuade her that to save his life she must let him think her renunciation is voluntary," Menendez continued, "that otherwise his life will pay the forfeit."

"But you say that you will not execute the threat."

"Perhaps not, but she will never know that. She must be so thoroughly imbued with the fear of his death that she will keep the secret."

Menendez paused and waited while the Dominican sat tapping his finger lightly on the table as if in deep thought. Finally the priest looked up and said: "It would give me much joy to see these young heretics brought to the Church. I admit I have taken much interest in both, especially this man Roget. I like him; somehow I seem to be drawn to him. I

am glad you spared his life and I will do all I can to help save his soul."

"His mother was from Avilles, you know," Menendez remarked, closely watching the other.

"No, I did not know that," the priest replied musingly, "though I am not surprised, for I noted the Asturian dialect."

"Then you will help me."

The piercing eyes of the Dominican friar looked into those of the Adelentado, "I will do all in my power to bring them to the Church, but I will do nothing beyond the office of a priest."

Menendez grasped his meaning, but it sufficed, for Father Salvandi's piety, his intolerant adherence to the Roman hierarchy, together with his loyalty to the Spanish crown was well known to the Adelentado. Since his childhood Menendez had heard the story of the Dominican for they were both from Avilles. Before entering the priesthood Salvandi had loved a beautiful maiden who had married another, and thus, disappointed in love, had chosen the life of a celibate. Years later, as a member of the Order of Saint Dominic, which was in control of the inquisition, it had become his duty to sit in judgment upon the same woman who was accused of heresy. Though it was said that he still loved her, he found her guilty and condemned her to the flames, receiving the commendation of the Supreme Council of the Inquisition for subverting an earthly passion for the glory of the Church. With such a man the Adelentado had no fears as long as his acts were justified by adherence to the cause, to which the priest had dedicated his life.

"That is all I could ask of you," Menendez said, with assumed humility.

The priest arose, "Now I will go to her," he said, with an air of relief that the interview was ended. But Menendez had already decided that it was best that he be present when Adele

was told. He wished to know that all went well and that she was safely within the fold before he again saw Roget or that either Adele or the priest should know that it was Olata who had saved Roget's life. He feared for the effect the discovery would have upon the priest. After Adele had been baptized it mattered little. And furthermore he wanted to be sure that Adele should fully understand all the conditions, and while the priest might be diligent in that respect he wished to be sure.

"I am also much interested in this young woman," he said, "would you allow me the privilege of accompanying you?"

The Dominican did not usually misinterpret the motives of the Adelentado, though he did in this case for he did not have all the facts. "I think it only proper that you should go," he said heartily. "I am sure she will wish to thank you for your magnanimity."

They went together to Adele. She showed signs of much weeping, wild eyed and disconsolate she gazed upon them, but when she recognized Menendez she ran to him with outstretched arms crying, "Let me have him now, please, it is all I ask, then let me die also."

Menendez did not speak French as fluently as Father Salvandi but he understood her quite well.

"I come to accept your offer, you saved his life," he said in the kindest tone, picking his words carefully.

But she did not comprehend. An expression of bewilderment passed over her face as she turned appealingly to the priest, who repeated the Adelentado's words.

"Saved his life!" she gasped, "then he is not dead."

"My daughter, he still lives," the priest said.

For a moment she could not grasp the full meaning of it all until Father Salvandi had carefully explained that Roget's life had been spared by the Adelentado.

Adele raised her eyes and in an even voice uttered the Huguenot prayer of Thanksgiving to God for his mercy. Menendez

was horrified and would have brusquely interrupted her but the priest restrained him. When she had ended her prayer, she thanked Menendez effusively for his goodness to her and added "where is he now? I must go to him."

"You can not go yet," Menendez said bluntly.

"Why not?" she asked in surprise.

Father Salvandi answered the question. "The Adelentado wishes you to conform to your promise to renounce the Lutheran faith and to become a Catholic."

"My promise?" she gasped.

"Yes, your promise to recant, that was the condition upon which his life was to be spared."

"Oh, yes," she said hoarsely, and for the first time it began to dawn upon her what she had said in that moment of desperation. She began to realize what it meant. She had promised to give up all that she held sacred, the religion of her family, the teachings of her childhood, all that for which she and her mother had suffered, all that her people had fought and died for, her very soul's salvation, she thought, must be sacrificed. She could not, it was too much to ask. With white, drawn face she looked upon the two men and slowly shook her head.

Menendez and the priest exchanged glances.

"But you promised," Father Salvandi said softly.

She turned to him with the look of a hunted animal. "Oh Father," she moaned, "is there no mercy?"

"Yes," the Dominican replied. "the Holy Church offers solace and comfort."

"But I cannot, Father, it would be a lie," she pleaded.

"Then you prefer to let Roget hang," interposed Menendez.

"Oh no, don't please, not that, not that," and she again fell upon her knees before him.

Father Salvandi raised her up. "We thought you would be true to your word, my daughter, the Adelentado accepted your promise in good faith."

Adele rather fell than sat upon a chair, she was limp from the ordeal, yet she had made her decision. Menendez's words had decided her, for again she saw the halter above her lover's head. It was for his life that she had made the promise and she would keep it.

"I will do as you say," she said faintly.

"Good," Menendez exclaimed, "now there is one other condition.

"Another condition?" she uttered wearily.

"You must never let Roget know that you recanted to save his life," Menendez asserted with finality.

But she did not understand, so Father Salvandi explained. "The Adelentado knows that Roget is too honorable to allow you to make the sacrifice for him. You must always let him think your renunciation was voluntary."

"But it is not," she said with some spirit.

"But it must be," Menendez put in.

"Yes, it is the only way, my daughter," the priest said kindly but firmly, "and will be the best for him. It will make him happier to feel that you are sincere in your espousal of the true faith."

Adele's eyes dwelt upon the face of the priest for a full moment as if trying to find one spark of hope. His recent kindness to her had engendered a feeling of trust. She shook her head sadly, "I fear Louis will never forgive me."

"I am sure he will," the Dominican replied soothingly, "perhaps at first it may try him, but in time he will come to know that you are right and then he, too, will embrace the true faith."

"But how can we find happiness in that which we do not believe?" she argued.

"But you will believe, the Holy Church will convince you," the priest said.

Menendez saw that it was time for him to interject his authority. Should Father Salvandi lose hope, his plans would

go astray. He endeavored to speak so that Adele would clearly comprehend his meaning. "We ask but little of you, Mademoiselle Darboux," he said in his best French, "you are only to assure Roget that you have voluntarily turned from heresy to the true Church. Do that and he will live, and be free to enjoy the happiness of your society. You will win him to the faith and the blessings of marriage may be yours, but on the contrary should you ever fail in your promise we shall surely know, and his life will be the penalty."

Adele could see no way out of the tangled web which enmeshed her. There was no hope, she must accept. With great effort her lips formed the words—

"I promise."

Menendez breathed a sigh of relief. That ordeal was over. He spoke to Father Salvandi in Spanish. "It is well, Father, will you perform the sacrament now? It is needful that it be done before I speak again to the heretic."

Thereupon the priest procured water, blessed it, and baptized her.

When the sacrament had been performed, Menendez said, "Now I will leave you under the care of Father Salvandi, and in a short time you may see Roget." He bowed and withdrew.

This matter having been concluded to his satisfaction the mind of the Adelentado reverted to problems which he knew confronted him in the acquisition of Fort Caroline.

Hurrying to his quarters where his captains were waiting for him at this hour, he addressed them. "Gentlemen and Brothers," he said, "we have won a great victory. It is God who does these things miraculously, let us praise and serve Him for such a great mercy and commend ourselves to Him in prayer. As this is St. Matthews' day the fort shall henceforth be called San Mateo, and it is so ordered that there shall be placed in charge of it Captain Gonzalo de Villaroel who shall be Alcaide of the fort and Governor of the district. I

shall leave with him three hundred soldiers. The remainder I shall take with me to St. Augustine, for I must return as soon as possible as it is needful it be protected lest the French Armada should return."

He then called Villaroel forward to take the oath of office, and ordered that a roster be made of all who remained with him at the fort and a memorandum of all the arms, ammunition and supplies. Two coats of arms over the west gate, one of the King of France and the other of Admiral Coligny, be ordered taken down and demolished and that an escutcheon with the royal arms of King Phillip of Spain, with two angels above the crown be made and placed in their stead.

Having attended to these duties he turned his mind again to Roget and Adele. He had the woman bound by ties which could not be broken. Even should she learn from her lover that it was the Indian who had saved his life, it would be too late for her to attempt to repudiate her promise for that would be apostasy and under the law the punishment of an apostate was even surer and more terrible than that of a heretic.

He found Roget established in his old room with Olata seated on a rug in the middle of the floor and with four soldiers on guard. Menendez bowed pleasantly to Roget and to Olata both of whom gazed sullenly upon him. He glanced over the room and his eyes fell upon the row of books on the shelves. He thought they were Roget's and his esteem grew as he thought of him as a scholar as well as a soldier.

"Captain Roget must be very learned to have read all these books," he said affably.

"They are not mine," Roget modestly admitted, "they are the property of Charnay, our Chaplain.

Menendez crossed the room and glanced over some of the titles. "Ah, books on the New Religion, I suppose."

"Yes."

The Adelentado did not pursue the subject further, there

was no necessity to say anything more now, for he had other business, but he determined that in a short time these heretical volumes should be cast into the flames and consumed.

He turned to Roget and took a seat placed by a guard. "I hope you are felling better now, Captain Roget?"

"Yes," was the curt reply, "but where is Mademoiselle Darboux?"

"She is with Father Salvandi and you may see her as soon as you and I have come to an agreement. Are you willing to accept my offer to faithfully serve me as an interpreter?"

"How long will the service last?"

"Until I can train others to take your place."

"Then what happens to me?" Roget asked with a searching look.

"I will send you by ship to Spain with safe conduct to France."

Roget sat up quickly and his face brightened. "You will guarantee safe conduct for both Adele and me?"

"Yes."

But the words "safe conduct" awakened in his memory the broken oath of Menendez. "What guarantee have I that you will do as you say?" he asked bitterly.

Menendez looked at the Frenchman for a moment before answering. "I cannot blame you for doubting me, Captain Roget," he said, thinking too of the incidents of the morning, "but then we were enemies, now I hope that we may be friends. If you will give me your solemn oath that you will use your influence with the Indians for peace between them and me, and will act as my interpreter in my negotiations with them, I will swear upon the crucifix, the holiest vow that I can give, that I will faithfully keep my pledge."

Roget studied the face of the Spaniard. He knew what his words meant and he was persuaded that the Adelentado now spoke truthfully. But there should be no question this time.

"Will you make that oath in the presence of Father Salvandi?"

"I will."

"Shall I be allowed my liberty?"

"Yes," Menendez replied, "and your sword also, for when I trust I trust implicitly."

The Adelentado was relying upon his estimate of Roget's character. He believed he could win him by a display of confidence whereas semblance of doubt would destroy all chance of the whole hearted loyalty which he desired. Besides he knew that in the relation of interpreter with the savages the heretic would have a weapon stronger than any sword he could give, He was compelled to place confidence in the heretic, he only hoped that the heretic would have confidence in him.

Roget had fully discussed the situation with Olata and they had agreed that it might be possible for him to escape to Saturiba and there arouse the Indians to war against the Spaniards. But what would be the fate of Adele? They could not desert her. They must await an opportune time when she could escape with them. He believed there was no help to be expected from Laudonniere and the brigantines, they were probably on their way to France by this time, and as for Ribault and the fleet, they were surely lost or something would have been heard from them by now. So the white man and the Indian had mutually pledged everlasting loyalty and agreed to bide their time.

But the proposal of Menendez to allow Adele and him to return to France offered the most alluring prospect of any. The fortunes of war had destroyed the hopes of New France, and Roget first after his faith was a soldier. Why should he not accept the situation, stifle his hatred for the cursed Spaniards, work in bondage as it were, looking forward to the hope of the future with her whom he loved more than he 'did life itself? Yes, it was best.

"Don Pedro Menendez," he said, "your words are fair enough and if you speak the fullness of your heart, I have nothing to fear. I will accept your sacred oath and give you mine in return. I know that I will serve you faithfully. May neither of us prove unworthy of the trust."

"It is well, we will go to Father Salvandi immediately," and turning to the guards the Adelentado said, "you are dismissed, Captain Roget is a free man, he may come and go at will."

The guards filed out of the room as Olata looked on stolidly wondering what it was all about.

Roget turned to the Indian, "Olata," he said, "the white cacique has given liberty to Olata's white brother to come and go as he wills. Olata may be with his white brother and peace is desired between Satouriana, mighty cacique of the Tumucans and the people of the white cacique. It is as the Great Spirit has decreed. May Olata bury his hatred of the white cacique even as his white brother has, for it is for the best."

Olata said nothing until he had arisen, "Olata waits to see how the white cacique gives love or hate to Olata's white brother, then Olata gives love or hate as white cacique gives."

He followed the white men from the room and on to Menendez's quarters, where he waited but looked longingly as the door closed behind Roget.

Menendez sent for Father Salvandi requesting that he bring Mademoiselle Darboux with him.

In a few minutes the two entered and Adele, at the sight of Roget, rushed forward. Unmindful of the presence of others, he clasped her in his arms. As they embraced Menendez and the priest, the only witnesses, looked on with approval each smiling understandingly at the other.

After the agreements between Menendez and Roget had been fully explained and the oaths duly administered as agreed, Roget tendered his thanks to Father Salvandi for caring for Adele in her distress.

"It is the office of a priest to serve those in distress," replied the Dominican, "but since Adele has renounced the heresies of Luther and embraced the faith of the true Church of Rome, the duty of serving her has become a pleasure, as well."

At the words of Father Salvandi, Roget's countenance which had expressed his gratitude changed to one of incredulity. He looked at Adele, then at the Dominican and last at the Adelen-tado and as his glance shot from one to another his frown deepened and the scar on his cheek flamed.

He turned again to Adele. "This is not true!" he gasped.

"Yes," she answered, as her gaze faltered before his.

He turned furiously upon Menendez, and with hand up-raised and clenched, started toward him. "You demon of Hell, you forced her into this."

But Adele stepped between them. Her face was white and drawn but she raised her head and her voice was firm. "No, Louis," she said, "I did it voluntarily."

CHAPTER XXI

THE DOMINICAN

A week had elapsed since that fateful day when the star of New France had set and it seemed that the glory of life had departed from the soul of Louis Roget. St. Matthew's day they called it, but to him it had seemed an age—on the gamut of emotions fate had left no note untouched—he had lived a lifetime in the turning of a sun. Even in the face of the tragedy to New France the gates of Paradise had opened into him when he had known that the heart of Adele Darboux was his, but they had closed and the fires of hell had been the substitute when he had learned that she had voluntarily renounced the religion which he had always thought was the very warp and woof of her existence. He could have gone to the halter—and in fact did go steadfast to the end, but she, without coercion as he thought, had forsaken all that she had previously held sacred in the moment when the real test of religious constancy had come.

He had left her with the priest and the Adelentado—they were her consorts now—and had gone to the forest with Olata, where he had fought it out with himself. Adele had chosen her way and it was a way he could not go. That he loved her he could not deny, his heart was ever ready with the answer, but his judgment told him there was no hope for him with her for there could be no union when they were so far divided.

Olata knew his white brother was in distress and tried to console him but the Indian could not understand the ways of the white men. To his mind there was one Great Spirit who blessed the people of the earth or punished them as were their

deserts and all men should worship Him, but why the white men should kill one another or grieve their hearts out because another worshipped Him in a different way was too much for the savage mind to grasp. Roget had taught him that Christ was love; he could see no love in killing those whose only crime was worshipping this same Christ, nor could he see why Roget could not love Adele even if she did worship the Great Spirit in a different way. To him love was a passion that the Great Spirit had put into the hearts of men and women as a part of the great scheme of things, subservient to the greater lover for Him, and which He smiled upon and blessed. So Roget received small comfort from Olata, in fact the Indian's sympathies were decidedly with Adele. To his mind his white sister had done no wrong.

But Roget had made his own decision. His duty to Adele was clear, he had promised Alphonse Darboux that he would care for her as if she were his own sister and that promise he would keep. He had faced the future bravely, he would keep the faith with Menendez and when he had served his time he would return to France—of course if Adele wished to go he would take her—but there could never be aught between them.

Before leaving Fort Caroline, now called San Mateo, he had sent Olata to Saturiba with the news of the downfall of the fort and that he had gone to Seloee with the white cacique and that peace was desired between him and the mighty Satouriana, therefore the white brother of Olata desired that there be no hostile act on the part of the Indians against the Spaniards at least until there had been an opportunity to pow wow. Olata had promised that all these things would be done and Roget had assured Menendez that he need have no fear of the savages at least for the present.

The way from Fort San Mateo to Saint Augustine had been a hard one. Though the clouds had gone and a flood of golden

sunshine had filled the days and sparkling moonbeams the nights, the land was rain soaked from the recent floods, the streams were out of their banks and traveling was difficult, but Menendez and Father Salvandi had exerted every effort to make Adele's journey as comfortable as possible. Roget's attitude toward her had been one of kindly attention, considerate in anticipating her needs, but neither seeking nor avoiding her company. He had noticed, however, that she had never been left alone with him, either Menendez, the priest or Prevatt making a third when they were together. Whether this was by design or accident he could not tell, but it had not mattered to him for there was nothing that could be said as far as he was concerned to change his determination. Often when he looked at her he would discover her eyes brimming with tears, though she would invariably smile when his glance met hers.

He had resented Prevatt's attentions to her, though he no longer felt it his right to interpose an objection as long as she was willing. The renegade's attitude toward her was one of arrogant assumption and while Roget could see that she was ill at ease in his company, she had the appearance of trying to avoid showing it. As for himself he had treated the traitor with the utmost disdain at all times.

Before reaching Saint Augustine, a soldier had been sent to announce their coming and they had been met by a procession of soldiers, with a number of women and children led by Father Mendoza and three other priests, each bearing a crucifix. Menendez and all the rest of the company, except Roget himself, kneeled as Father Mendoza gave thanks to the Lord for the wonderful victory. He noticed that Prevatt readily joined in these devotions as also did Adele who was beside Father Salvandi, though he forgave her as he knew she did not understand the language and would not know what it was all about.

Some soldiers who were near him scowled at him and de-

manded to know the reason why he did not kneel with the rest, but before he had opportunity to answer the crowd was wild with their jubilations and these soldiers joined the others who laughed and wept for joy. Roget watched Adele who stood beside the Dominican her face a picture of sadness, and Prevatt whose countenance displayed a keen interest in all that was going on as if he desired to be part of it yet by his act of treachery he was a thing apart. Roget sorrowfully thought how alike they were in deed, the man a renegade, the woman an apostate.

The procession had escorted Menendez into the settlement of Saint Augustine where Roget had heard the Adelentado make a speech telling of his great victory over his enemies, referring to the ruthless slaying of sick soldiers as his punishment of the enemies of God.

Two days after their arrival news had come from San Mateo that the two brigantines which had escaped had left the mouth of the river sailing northeast. It was with a sense of loneliness that Roget thought that Charnay, Laudonniere and the others were on board bound for France and that the last ties of home were now severed.

It had been four days now since his arrival and time had hung heavily on his hands for there had been little to do except an occasional parley with the Indians. Olata had come bringing a message of peace from Satouriana with the promise that within a few days, when the damages of the storm had been repaired, the mighty cacique himself would come to make a treaty with the white cacique since the white brother of Olata wished it.

Menendez was delighted at this news, for he regarded peace with the Indians the only essential necessary for the consummation of all his plans. He regarded Roget as a real asset and endeavored in every way to make him feel that he was a part of his organization. He had placed him with a Captain of a

company of Asturians, whom Roget found to be quite congenial. Among the soldiers the story of his miraculous escape from death had become known and also his great influence with the Indians, so he had at once become an object of curiosity. His quite dignified demeanor and the further fact that he was half Spaniard and spoke the language fluently had readily commanded their respect.

Adele had been placed under the care of Juanita Acosta and her duenna, Catalina Velasco, and lived at the home of the Adelentado where Roget had been assured by Menendez that he would be welcomed. But he refrained from taking advantage of the invitation, preferring to remain alone when Olata did not come, wandering about the settlement watching the vast amount of work which was being done.

He had seen Prevatt much in the company of Adele, but always with Juanita or the duenna and he knew that the renegade had a good excuse, as Juanita did not speak French nor Adele Spanish, he was needed as an interpreter. Juanita Acosta had been very gracious to Roget, at each meeting urging him to join them and when he would politely decline she would urge him to visit them at her home. Both Menendez and Father Salvandi had told her of Adele's conversion and that they desired Roget also to be brought into the Church and urged her assistance in the cause. But Juanita desired the company of Roget for reasons of her own. She saw that Prevatt was desperately in love with Adele and it was not to her liking to be without opportunity for conquest. True there were many Spanish officers, but there was something romantic about this handsome Frenchman with all the strange stories concerning him. Besides any heretic that her uncle, the Adelentado, would not hang must be a superior being. So the more that Roget appeared to evade Juanita, the more she desired to know him better.

But Roget continued to keep to himself and she, like Men-

endez, never made a decision without taking immediate action, so straightway she went to Father Salvandi with the complaint that she could not convert a heretic she could not see and he must assist to bring him in the line of her fire. Therefore Father Salvandi went in search of Roget.

He found the heretic watching the men building the new fort which Menendez had laid out, for it seemed that the Adelentado never wearied. It was remarkable, the work which had been accomplished in the short time since the Spaniards had landed.

"Good morning, my son," the priest said coming up behind him.

"Good morning, Senor," Roget replied. He had refrained from calling the priests "father," which omission Father Salvandi had charitably overlooked, but not so Father Mendoza, the Jesuit, who had already spoken to the Adelentado concerning the disrespect of the heretic.

"Will you walk with me, my son?" the priest continued affably, "I would show you the new chapel we are building."

"Yes, I will go," Roget readily consented. There was nothing else to do and the company of any one was a relief, for Olata had not come this morning.

The new chapel was being built to the south of the site of the new fort, near the house of the Adelentado. Here Menendez had planned the centre of the settlement of Saint Augustine. A landing pier had been built, from which a road or street had been cut through the forest to the barracks five hundred paces from the shore. Facing this street was the house of the Adelentado and immediately across from it was the chapel or church which was just being completed.

There was, at present, only a rough trail cut through the woods between the first and hastily constructed entrenchments around the Indian village of Selooe and the pier. Between these two points Menendez had laid out his permanent fort.

Along this trail which ran about two hundred paces from the bank of the river through a forest of live oak, palm and palmetto, Roget and Father Salvandi strolled on his morning in late September. All nature seemed to smile, the sky was cloudless and the world was filled with sunshine, a strong breeze from the sea freshened the warmth of the atmosphere. The forest was a flood of sparkling emerald light and the mocking birds seemed to vie in their attempt to fill the air with melody.

The priest would occasionally glance at the tall figure that moved beside him, marking the soldierly bearing, the profile of the well cut forehead and chin, the forceful jaw but noting the gloom that seemed to ever set upon the countenance of his companion. He wondered how much the recanting of Adele Darboux had to do with Roget's melancholy. His mind reverted to the only woman he had ever loved, and how duty and his loyalty to the Church had forced him to stifle that love and condemn her to the flames. This man reminded him much of Isobel Mendrano. Was it a coincidence that Roget too was stifling his love for Adele Darboux because of his loyalty to his faith? He knew the physical suffering that had come to him from smothering an earthly passion and yet the spiritual happiness he had found for having done so; he prayed that Roget would embrace the true faith and find happiness in every phase.

He believed that it was important that Roget and Adele should be constantly in each other's company if the plan for his conversion was to succeed. Menendez had argued that they should be kept apart at least for a few days following her renunciation and that Prevatt be encouraged in his attentions to her hoping thereby to arouse the fires of jealousy in Roget, and bring him more quickly into the Church. But the Dominican had seen that this plan would not be successful and had told Menendez so. Juanita was to do her part and he was also expected to do his, toward the accomplishment of their purpose.

It was a difficult subject to broach with this gloomy, taciturn fellow, but he had to start sometime. "My son," he began, "your countenance and manner bespeak sadness within your heart, I would that I might inspire your confidence to speak freely to me."

Roget proceeded several paces before answering. "I thank you, senor, you have been very kind to me since first I knew you, but there is nothing wherein you could help."

"One never knows where another can help. As a priest, it has been my office to comfort the forlorn. You apparently have no one in whom you can confide. You are sad, if I could offer consolation I would be glad."

"I thank you, senor. I do not know that I will need you, but if I should, I will remember."

There was silence for a minute. The Dominican tried another tack. "You would not deem it improper, should I refer to a subject which I feel sure would greatly interest you?"

"If the subject interested me I would be pleased to have you speak of it, if it did not interest me I would frankly tell you so." Roget expected the subject to be one of religion which he thought useless to discuss with the priest.

"I refer to Adele, you have not seen her for two days."

Roget wondered if the Dominican could have read his thoughts for he had just been wondering if he was quite fair to her and was debating with himself whether he should not go to her and demand to know if she was really at heart a Catholic.

"No," he admitted, "I have not seen her for two days."

"Do you think it right that you should avoid her as you do?"

"We have nothing in common now," Roget said sullenly.

"Nothing in common!" the priest exclaimed. "Besides this man Prevatt, from whom you yourself asked me to protect her, you are the only countryman she has in all this land," and Father Salvandi added softly, "besides, she loves you."

"If she is as fickle in her love as in her religion, of what value is her love?" Roget retorted bitterly.

"My son, it is not fickleness to choose the true way for the salvation of her soul."

"Senor Salvandi," Roget said stiffly, "you and I differ as to the true way."

"But we may not differ always, my son, you may yet see the light."

"I have seen the light, senor, but it is not the light born aloft by you and yours."

"The Holy Church has been the light of the ages, my son," the priest said calmly. "Your own leader Martin Luther received the light from the Church before he taught his heresies."

"But it was the injustice of the Church which made Luther teach the New Religion. He knew the falsity of the doctrines therefore he could speak knowingly."

They had passed the house of the Adelentado and the newly cut road to the chapel beyond. A bell tower had been erected just in front and a cross was being placed upon the comb of the roof. Father Salvandi did not reply to Roget's last statement. As much as he liked the young man it set his soul on fire to hear him speak in this manner concerning the Holy Church and he feared he would lose his patience. His voice was therefore very calm as he said, "Here is our little chapel dedicated to God. Some day there will rise a great cathedral in its place, yet in all its glory it will be no more sanctified than this little church in the woods. From here will go out the Word to the savage people who will be brought to Christ. This will be the seed from which the great harvest shall spring!"

Roget said nothing as he thought of Charnay's dreams of his little chapel beneath the palms at Fort Caroline and how often they had talked of the times when his dreams would come true. But it could never be. He knew that behind the power

of his Government, his own beloved France, was a greater power that reached its tentacles even unto the throne, where the arrogant Catherine de Medici, herself only a pawn, bargained with the hated King of Spain for the blood of innocent people. And there was no recourse, the Fleur-de-Lis the flag for which he had fought now bowed subservient to the will of this insidious force which throttled where it could not control. He knew that Charnay and Ribault, Salvandi and Menendez, and himself for that matter were but minor actors in this world drama.

The Dominican walked to the door of the church as if he would enter, but waited for Roget who had stopped several feet away.

"Won't you come in?" the priest invited.

"No," Roget replied brusquely.

The piercing eyes of Father Salvandi rested for a moment upon the heretic, a menacing frown hovered over his brow and his words dropped slowly and icily. "You refuse even to enter the House of God."

Roget turned fiercely upon him. "Senor Salvandi, you ask me that! Yes, I would enter the House of God if I could, but I will have naught to do with Rome or any thing connected with it. It took from me my mother and destroyed her. And for what? Because she married the man she loved and thought to worship God as he did. When she returned to Avilles to visit her dying mother they took her, your Church and its inquisition, and burned her at the stake," he sobbed aloud. "I was only a child then, but when I saw her there on the hill by the city of Avilles a victim of the accursed Auto-da-fe I swore that so long as there was breath in my body I would fight the Church of Rome."

The Dominican's countenance had changed as the recital progressed. The words of exprobation that were upon his lips died unspoken and an expression of horror slowly overspread

his face. All thoughts of heresy had now fled from his brain and for a moment he was changed from a priest to a man. He strode to the Frenchman and grasped him by the arm—so roughly that Roget recoiled, but the ascetic's long skinny fingers clutched him tightly as he glared into his face.

"Your mother was Isabel Mendrano," he whispered hoarsely.

Roget caught his breath, "Yes, how did you know?"

"Isabel Mendrano," the Dominican repeated. "Yes, I might have known. You reminded me of her from the first. Poor child," and he turned his head away.

"You knew her," Roget gasped.

"Yes, I knew her and loved her." The priest's head was bowed, Roget thought in respect for her memory. He did not know that it was remorse for the part he had played in her destruction.

"Now you know why I hate the Church of Rome," the heretic said grimly.

The Dominican almost instantly regained his composure, he raised his head and there were no signs of emotion in the immobile face. He was greatly mortified that he had so far forgotten himself as to admit of an earthly passion and for his error he knew that he must do penance.

"My son," he said as if in explanation of his weakness, "before I entered the priesthood, I knew your mother when she was a girl. We were neighbors and friends. I was very fond of her."

Roget, however, now regarded the priest in an entirely different light.

Instead of one in the great system of the Church, an integral part of the Roman hierarchy, he beheld in him a man with a heart, who had loved. And if the priest had but known, he had made more progress in gaining the confidence of the heretic by the disclosure than he could have accomplished in a lifetime of argument.

CHAPTER XXII

THE JESUIT

Jean Prevatt was calling on Adele Darboux at the home of the Adelentado and found her taking lessons in Spanish under the tutelage of Dona Catalena Velasco who knew just enough French to assist the young woman in her translations and as Prevatt thought just enough to make her presence objectionable when he called on Adele. He had never yet been able to be alone with her, even on the journey from San Mateo it was either the Adelentado, the priest, the heretic, or someone who happened to be present or appear just at the time when he thought that the longed for moment had arrived. At the home of Menendez it had been the same, Dona Juanita or the duenna were usually with her or if not, Adele always called one of them. If it was Juanita, she usurped the conversation in Spanish, if it was the duenna she spoke little but her ears were perfect and her knowledge of French sufficient for Adele to use it as an excuse to parry any advances which he might make toward unburdening his heart.

Prevatt was desperate. From his first sight of Adele he had longed for her and thought how the death of Roget would remove his only rival. He was, therefore, greatly disappointed when he had found that Menendez would spare the heretic's life, and had attempted to poison the mind of the Adelentado against him. Menendez had listened patiently to his story of Roget's influence with the Indians and the danger of his exciting them against the Spaniards, but Prevatt found to his disappointment that his story only increased the Adelentado's respect. His only hope of destroying Roget now lay in his

influence with Father Mendoza, the Jesuit.

He sat gloomily watching Adele and the duenna, each monotonously struggling in their reciprocal efforts to instruct each other, as he schemed to find some way to be alone with Adele. The quiet monotony was suddenly broken by the noisy advent of Juanita Acosta.

"Come, let's get out. Hear the birds; all nature calls," she cried as she jerked the book from the lap of the duenna and pulled Adele to her feet. She pointed out the window and waved her arms wildly, laughing merrily as she threw her mantilla over her head and pulled Adele toward the door, calling: "Come on Catalina, come on Captain Prevatt, no more studying now."

As they left the house Father Salvandi and Roget were coming from the church, picking their way across the road from which the roots of the palmetto had not yet been grubbed. At the sight of the two men Juanita ran ahead of the others, the mantilla, caught in the breeze, flurried about her wealth of black hair, her large brown eyes sparkling and her smile displaying her white teeth. She met the priest with outstretched hands crying: "Oh, Father Salvandi, welcome," and turning to Roget she continued excitedly, "and Senor Roget, at last you have honored us with a visit. Won't you come in? No, it is too glorious on the outside. We will go down to see the new pier, it has just been completed."

The presence of Roget was not at all to Prevatt's liking. He noticed an immediate change in Adele, she suddenly seemed very alert, and he found that he must desert the slow-moving duenna to keep up with Adele who hurried after Juanita.

The priest met them and spoke cordially to Adele, "How are you, my daughter," and to Prevatt, "I see that Monsieur El Capitan is still on duty." The renegade scowled, but did not reply.

Adele caught Roget's eye and her glance wavered an instant

and then with an effort she looked at him steadily. "You are quite a stranger, Louis," she said, trying to smile.

"Yes, I have been very busy," he remarked casually in French.

"Oh please tell me what you are talking about, Senor Roget," Juanita interposed gushingly, "I really won't know all that is going on unless I learn your language."

He repeated his words in Spanish.

"Yes, you have been entirely too busy," she pouted, "and you deserve severe punishment for disobeying my commands." She shook her finger at him reprovingly.

"What commands have I disobeyed, may I ask?" He questioned seriously. It was too soon after the revelation which had come to him through the conversation with the Dominican for him to turn suddenly to jest.

"I ordered you to come to see me," and her face was wreathed in a bewitching smile.

"I did not know that it was a command, or I would have obeyed her majesty immediately," he countered politely.

"Then I will accept your humble apology, but I hope there will be no further misunderstanding. Father Salvandi and my uncle, the Adelentado, have appointed me to see that your sojourn in St. Augustine is a pleasant one. How can I attend to my duties if you are a recluse?"

Roget looked into the laughing eyes of the Spanish maiden and wondered if she would jest about a matter so serious to him as his bondage. Had the Adelentado really told her that his stay in St. Augustine was in the nature of a visit? Did she really regard him as a guest? It might be so. The ways of Pedro Menendez were indeed mysterious as he had found. The Adelentado could break his oath and send a man to the halter and extend the courtesies of a Spanish grandee with the same phlegmatic indifference. But suppose the assertion was only a cruel thrust upon the part of the young woman!

"I was not aware that you were the official entertainer of the interpreter to the Indians, nor that he was the honored guest that you paint him," he said.

Juanita did not catch the irony which he intended for his words and tone to convey, or if so, she did not care to notice it, for she came back with more banter and her eyes sparkling. "You see it is your own fault that you are ignorant. I could have told you in the first place if you had obeyed my summons. Besides, in your duties as interpreter, must you confine yourself to the Indians? I have a terrible time making Adele understand my Spanish and Catalina's French is horrible."

At the mention of Adele he turned to look for her. She was engaged in earnest conversation with Father Salvandi, but he caught the eye of Prevatt and saw there the gleam of hate.

The renegade had been compelled to stand beside Catalina Velasco and listen to the chatter of Juanita and Roget, while Father Salvandi talked to Adele. He had nothing to say to the duenna and she evidently had nothing to say to him since he had failed to answer two questions propounded to him on the subject of birds and she now stood calmly watching a cardinal that sang serenely from the topmost bough of a magnolia.

Prevatt knew that Adele loved Roget, but her renunciation had created a chasm between them which nothing could bridge, for the heretic had demonstrated by going to the halter that he would never recant. As long as she remained a Catholic there could be no union between the two, he well knew, but as long as Roget lived he also doubted if he could ever win Adele. So the removal of the heretic was the goal he sought.

Roget's utter indifference to him was like canker that ate into his very soul. Even now his glance merely passed over

him and rested on Adele, with an expression of deep concern and though the heretic chatted with Juanita, Prevatt knew that he was thinking of the other. It was very irksome to him that Juanita was focusing the attention of everyone upon this heretic when he himself wanted so much to be the principal actor in the scene.

"We are going to the pier, you must go with us," she was now saying and appealing to Father Salvandi to aid her to persuade him.

And she had her way, Roget walking with her, followed by the priest with Adele, and he was compelled to trail along with Catalina who still persisted in discussing birds. He secretly cursed his fate and was even more angered a few minutes later to see Roget again the object of admiration of the others.

They had reached the pier which extended a hundred feet out over the river, called the Mantanzas by the Adelentado from a port of the same name in Cuba. At the extreme end there were four Indians, with their canoes tied to the piling, who were engaged in a heated discussion. It was the first time that Juanita and Catalina had seen the taciturn savages exhibiting any signs of emotion, so with great interest she listened to what seemed to them to be only noisy jargon. But Roget, after a moment, explained that they were arguing over the division of a few trinkets which they had received in exchange for some skins brought to the settlement.

One of them happened to have been among those who had visited Fort Carolina with Satouriana and immediately recognized Roget and informed the others that he was the white brother of Olata son of the great cacique. Instantly there was a hush and Juanita and the others were surprised to see them make obiesance to Roget and show the respect in which they held him.

The story of Roget's deliverance from death by the arrow

of Olata had gone abroad throughout the land of the Tumucans and its vividness had been enhanced by the telling. Mothers recounted to their children how the Great Spirit had spoken to the son of their King and had led him to the place of execution and guided the arrow which saved his white brother. Roget was, therefore, not only the white brother of their future king, but one favored by the Great Spirit. He spoke to the Indians in their own tongue and they asked him to arbitrate their differences.

To the delight of every one, except Prevatt, he listened as each gravely presented their argument and when all had spoken he divided the trinkets equally between them, evidently to their entire satisfaction.

"Well done," said Father Salvandi, "you have dispensed justice and they are content.

"It is not always so easy," Roget replied, laughing.

Catalina called the priest to show him some large fish that were sporting in the water on the opposite side beneath the pier and as he turned away the Indians returned again. They had found there was one other trinket left, a small bell, the tinkle of which had charmed the ears of each and which had, in the beginning, been the chief object of controversy. One of the savages had placed it in the canoe and it had been overlooked in the excitement incident to the recognition of Roget.

This had to be disposed of and it presented a more serious problem. There was nothing to do but decide by lot, so Roget took four small sticks of different lengths.

"Let me hold them," Juanita cried when he explained his object.

He placed them in her hand and told the Indians to each draw one and the shortest should be the winner of the bell. The element of chance appealed to the savages and they entered into the contest with grunts of approval, the winner

receiving the noisy congratulations of the others, bearing away his trophy with great delight.

Father Salvandi and Catalina, who had been watching the fish, joined the group just as the last Indian drew his straw from Juanita's hand. The priest halted suddenly as he beheld the performance and seemed as if about to speak to Juanita, but evidently changed his mind and turned to Adele.

"How wonderful it is to be able to talk the language of the savages, please teach me," Juanita exclaimed, standing by Roget's side and smiling up into his face.

"It would take a long time and much practice to get the pronunciation," Roget said laughingly.

"I would not object to the length of time, would you?" she looked at him coquettishly.

"Certainly not," he replied gallantly. He was diverted by her vivaciousness, it seemed to bring him out of his melancholy, and besides she reminded him of the friends of his mother's whom he knew when he was a child in Avilles.

Father Salvandi was questioning Adele as to what had happened while he and Catalina was looking at the fish and received a full account of the method Roget had used in deciding which of the savages should receive the bell, stating that Juanita had held the sticks or straws.

Prevatt overheard the conversation which was in French and then heard the priest say to Catalina in Spanish, "you should warn Juanita against indulging in such frivolities as drawing straws, it is regarded socery, but as it was done innocently and did not come to my notice I will take no account of it."

The renegade thought nothing of the remark at the time, he was sullenly watching Roget and Juanita and thinking bitterly how unlucky he was not to have learned the language of the Indians. No one had ever made so much of him and yet he had turned traitor to his own country for these Spaniards.

He listened to the merry sallies of Juanita and the low chuckles of Roget and his anger grew. He happened to catch the expression of Adele's face, as she stood at one side intently watching them. She evidently could understand just enough to make her wish to hear more, her eyes had lost their softness and shot jealous glances through narrowed lids, her lips were compressed and a flush of anger highly colored her cheeks.

Prevatt smiled sardonically and walked to her side.

"It appears that Mademoiselle Darboux and I are detrop," he said blandly, "suppose we stroll on."

She started at the sound of his voice and her manner changed instantly, "very well," she said forcing a smile.

They walked along the pier, their departure unnoticed by the others, until they reached the beginning of the road. A few yards away there was a trail formerly much used by the savages, that led south along the bank of the river passing beneath thick, tangled growth of trees and vine forming a bower through which the sun could scarcely penetrate. Prevatt turned down this trail and Adele moved beside him, not caring where she went, she was angry enough with Roget to want to hurt him as much as he was hurting her.

It was the first time that she had been alone with Prevatt.

"Mademoiselle Darboux," he said softly, "why do you shun me?"

"Shun you?" she exclaimed with a hollow laugh, "there has not been a day that I have not been with you since . . ." she halted and a tone of bitterness came into her voice, "since we left Fort Caroline."

"I know, but you are never willing to see me alone. You appear to plan to always have someone else present . . . and I cannot tell you . . . I cannot speak what my hearts cries aloud."

She stopped. They had only gone a few feet from the road,

but the gloom within the shadows startled her, the tension of his voice and the significance of his words made her shudder.

"Let's go back," she said in alarm.

"No, not yet, please." He came close to her. Adele, I love you, I love you more than any man ever loved a woman."

In his passionate pleading he caught her arm. The touch of his hand upon her skin seemed to burn her. She must get away. But he held her and in her struggles he pulled her to him. Then in her terror involuntarily she cried the one name that was always in her heart.

"Louis!"

The exclamation angered Prevatt. "So its that heretic who keeps you from me, I thought so. But he shall not have you. You are mine, mine, I tell you." The man seemed lost in a frenzy of passion. He caught her in his arms as she tried to tear herself from him.

There was sound of hurrying feet, but he did not hear. A tall form loomed in the path and he was jerked rudely from her and hurled headlong into the tangled undergrowth beside the trail. Roget caught Adele in his arms and held her close to him.

Prevatt, lying prone among the saw palmetto, the knife-like branches of which had gashed his face and hands, heard Roget say, "The traitor, I will kill him."

"No, no," Adele said half hysterically, "don't, Louis, it will mean more trouble for you. Let's go back to the others."

He saw them move along the tenebrous trail to where the sun glared at the beginning of the pier. He disengaged himself from the jungle and wiped the blood from his cheek. He found his hat and started back to the road and could hear the excited voice of Juanita inquiring the cause of Adele's cry of alarm.

He could hear Roget's scornful answer. "It was only a snake."

"Where is Captain Prevatt?" Catalina Velasco asked, but he could not catch Roget's reply.

Prevatt was in a strange plight, with face disfigured and clothes torn. Rage and mortification vied for mastery, he thirsted for revenge upon Roget yet he was in a quandary what explanation to make to the others. As he emerged from the trail his hand was upon his rapier, the others were grouped several yards away on the pier. He met the cold gleam of Father Salvandi's eyes as the priest advanced to meet him.

"Monsieur El Capitan will find repartee safer than rapier," he said sternly, and adding with the smile which Prevatt hated so," the heretic wields a dangerous sword and the Adelentado will even be less gentle, I trow, should Monsieur El Capitan be the aggressor."

Prevatt hesitated. The remark brought him to his senses, he was a coward at heart and knew that he was no match for Roget in a duel and he feared the punishment of Menendez above all things. He turned upon his heels and walked rapidly along the road which led to the settlement. There were surer and safer ways of seeking revenge upon the heretic than risking his own skin.

In his hut he changed his apparel and dressed the wound on his cheek with some ointment given to him by one of the lay brothers. Then he went to look for Father Mendoza whom he found reading in his room.

"Ah, my son, come in," said the priest, and noting the scar, "what is this, a wound?"

"Yes, father," Prevatt replied.

"And how, pray?"

"It was the heretic."

"The heretic!" exclaimed the priest, "did he assault you?"

"Yes, father."

The Jesuit vigorously fanned himself. "It is not enough that this herttic be allowed to go about openly in his sins but

he must attack the faithful."

"The heretic has always hated me," Prevatt said meekly. "He persecuted me at Fort Caroline when he found I was a Catholic and drove me out into the wilderness. Now he credits me with the fall of the heretic's fort, of which he has just cause," he interspersed proudly. "Therefore he revenges himself upon me at will, for he knows he has the friendship of the powerful Dominican."

Father Mendoza sat erect and cast a quick glance at Prevatt. "Why do you use the term 'powerful Dominican'?" he demanded sharply.

Prevatt, secretly exulting that his shot had gone home, asked innocently enough, "Are not the Dominicans very powerful, reverend father?"

"Not any more so than the Jesuits," the priest replied with some asperity.

"I did not know," the renegade said softly.

"It is true, my son, that the Order of Saint Dominic is older than the Order founded by Ignatius Loyola, but the Society of Jesus was approved by the Holy Father, Paul III, and now the Jesuits are as powerful as the Dominicans."

Prevatt covertly watched the countenance of the priest. "Yes," he said in his meekest tone, "I was aware that it was true in Europe, but as Father Salvandi seems to have so great influence with the Adelentado I supposed that the Dominicans were more powerful in the New World."

"Wherein has the Dominican more power with the Adelentado?" the Jesuit demanded caustically. "Am I not the Vicar?"

"Through his influence the heretic is allowed to do as he pleases, he calls the priests 'senor,' he does not attend mass, and he is permitted to practice sorcery."

"To practice sorcery, are you sure?"

"Is not drawing straws sorcery?"

"Without doubt, and so prescribed in the Directorium Inqui-

sitorum."

The reference to the Inquisition brought a thrill to Prevatt. In his mind's eye he could see Roget suffering on the rack or possibly burning at the stake. This was much more alluring to his revengeful soul than the halter. But he must not, by the slightest inkling, allow his vengeful purpose to be revealed to the good priest.

"I trust my devotion to the Church will not be misunderstood," he said sanctimoniously.

"Indeed not," replied the Jesuit, "it is your duty, you should tell me all."

"The heretic has not only been guilty of practicing socery with the savages, but with an innocent young woman," Prevatt said glibly.

Father Mendoza thought his reference was to Adele Darboux, the new convert. "This is dreadful, it must be stopped. I shall bring it to the attention of the Adelentado at once."

Prevatt knew of the favor in which Roget was held by Mendez and felt that he should further fortify the good priest against the obstacles which he might encounter. "I fear you will find the influence of the Dominican very strong with the Adelentado. You must prepare yourself to exert all your influence as Vicar."

The statement had the desired effect, the features of the Jesuit were set with determination. "My son," he said, speaking deliberately, "I will not turn back when I once begin. The influence of the Jesuits at the Court of Spain is too strong for even the Adelentado of Florida to hesitate to do the bidding of the Vicar when it concerns a dereliction of duty. If the Dominican desires a test of strength we shall have it." He arose and paced the room, his fan keeping time with his footsteps. "Yes," he continued, "I will do it, I have given it full thought, I will go to the Adelentado at once, and you, my son, will go with me."

"I go with you!" Prevatt exclaimed in consternation.

"Yes, you will go with me. You will state to the Adelen-tado what you said to me. He will commend you as a devout Catholic, interested in purging the Church of heresy and sorcery."

"Perhaps it will be better for you to go alone, father . . ." Prevatt began, but the priest interrupted him.

"No, no, my son, I know best. Pedro Menendez always demands to know the reason and to have proof; you can tell him at once. It will save time. Come."

Prevatt had expected only to sow the seeds of discord in the breast of the Jesuit. Nothing had been farther from his mind than to be compelled to face the Adelen-tado and possibly Father Salvandi. But what was done was done, and he could not retreat now. However, it was with a crest-fallen air and many misgivings that he followed Father Mendoza from the room.

When they arrived at the Adelen-tado's quarters Menendez was going over the plans for the new fort, but dismissed Captains Patina, Valdez and his brother, Bartolome Menendez with whom he was in conference, to admit Father Mendoza. The unusual call from the Vicar excited his curiosity, which was increased by the sight of the renegade in company with him.

He arose as they entered. "Reverend father, you honor me," he said, offering a seat to him, but taking no notice of Prevatt save a cold glance and leaving him standing.

The Jesuit wasted no time in preliminaries. "I came upon an important mission," he said fervidly, "it is concerning the heretic, Roget."

Menendez's brow contracted, and he glanced again at Prevatt, but waited for the priest to proceed.

"I believe I have spoken to you regarding his impious and disrespectful manner of speaking to the officers of the Church.

I find now that he does not attend mass, flaunts his heresy before the world and is even guilty of villanously attacking a pious member, seeking revenge upon him for his act in leading you to attack the heretics at San Mateo."

Father Mendoza preferred to hold in reserve the most serious charge of sorcery for reasons of his own.

Menendez looked hard at Prevatt. "When did Roget attack you" he asked sharply.

"Less than an hour ago," the renegade replied.

"See the wound upon his cheek," interjected the Jesuit.

"Without any provocation on your part?" the Adelentado question.

"I had not even spoken to him," the renegade replied truthfully.

Menendez tapped his finger nervously on the table. Here was another problem to face. He was expecting Satouriana to come any day to negotiate a treaty with him and he knew that its success depended entirely upon Roget, for he had found that his influence with the Indians was even greater than he had first supposed. On the other hand, he knew what Father Mendoza said was true, the stubbornness of the heretic roiled him also, but Roget was faithfully keeping his agreement and he must at least wait until he had made his treaty before forcing the heretic to his bidding. He had discussed the matter fully with Father Salvandi and they had agreed that peace with the savages and the possibilities of missionary work among them was of more importance than saving the soul of one heretic.

But he also knew the power of the Jesuits in Spain. It would not be well for a report to be made to King Phillip by the General of the Society of Jesus that the Adelentado was allowing a heretic to go unmolested in the colony of his Catholic Majesty over the protest of the Vicar.

Father Mendoza interrupted his thoughts. "The heretic is

eternally damned in his present state," he said with an air of finality, "he is, therefore, subject to the animadversions of the Holy Office, but in addition he has defied the Church and is justiciable by the Inquisition."

This was what Menendez had feared. If Roget's case was referred to the Inquisitors it would be out of his hands and, if they so decided, he would go to the rack or to the stake. But the Inquisition was under the control of the Order of Saint Dominic and, fortunately, Father Salvandi was at the head of that order in Florida. He trusted the Dominican to use discretion. The suggestion might be unfortunate for Roget, but it pointed a way out of Menendez's dilemma, for he could at least transfer the responsibility to the shoulders of Father Salvandi and thereby prevent an adverse report of his own conduct being made to King Phillip.

"I fully appreciate your devotion to duty, reverend father," he said unctuously, "but you can readily understand that the Inquisition is under the jurisdiction of Father Salvandi."

"I am fully aware of that," the Jesuit agreed.

"Suppose I send for him, I think it only proper."

Prevatt quaked in his shoes at the thought of facing the Dominican. He almost wished he had left the matter alone and hoped that Father Mendoza would raise an objection, but on the contrary he readily asquiesced.

"It is quite proper," the Jesuit said.

Menendez sent a messenger, and it happened that Father Salvandi had just returned to his room, which was nearby, and he entered directly.

The usual courtesies were exchanged between the two priests and Father Salvandi thanked the Adelentado for the proffered seat, glancing with curiosity at Prevatt who stood at one side and failed to meet his eye.

"Father Salvandi," Menendez began, "I have summoned you for the purpose of referring to you a complaint of Father

Mendoza against Roget, the heretic, who it seems does not attend mass and is guilty of disrespect to the clergy in the manner of his address." Menendez was looking squarely into the eye of Father Salvandi with whom he had previously discussed this subject and upon whom he depended to thoroughly understand his purpose in specifically stating the case again. He knew his man, for the Dominican bowed his head gravely and the Adelentado knew that their minds had met. "Furthermore," Menendez continued, "the heretic has been guilty of villainously assaulting Captain Prevatt, a pious member, in revenge for leading us against the heretics. Therefore, Father Mendoza suggests that the case should be referred to the Inquisition, and since you would be in control of the Inquisitors I have taken the liberty of summoning you so that the matter may be placed in your hands. That is a correct statement, is it not?" he concluded, turning to Father Mendoza.

"Quite correct," replied the Jesuit, bowing his head impressively.

Father Salvandi sat for a moment with his long thin fingers locked across his stomach, his chin resting on his chest, his eyes upon the floor as if in deep thought.

Slowly he raised his head and looked at the Jesuit. "Reverend father I am sure that your motives spring from your devotion to the Church."

"I am glad that the reverend father admits that," the Jesuit interrupted, "but I was not aware that my motives were the subject of debate."

"Pardon me, Father Mendoza, you quite misunderstand me," the Dominican said calmly, "I did not intend to question your motives, I was merely leading up to my point . . ."

The Jesuit, in whose mind still rankled the words of Prevatt, believed he had scored against the Dominican and was not willing to rest on his laurels. He interrupted again.

"Then please state your point precisely, Father Salvandi, I beg you." He glanced exultantly from Menendez to Prevatt.

The Dominican did not in the least display the impatience he felt. "I was going to say that you may be laboring under a misapprehension as to some of the accusations against the heretic, Roget."

"Then you admit he is a heretic!" the Jesuit interjected triumphantly.

"I do not know that it has been denied even by himself," Father Salvandi asserted, unmoved by the antagonism of the other.

"Then he is justiciable by the Inquisition," the Jesuit contended.

"That is not the point," the Dominican parried.

"As Vicar of Florida I claim that is the point," Father Mendoza persisted.

Menendez looked on with misgiving, he was powerless in an argument between the two, it was not within his province, but he could see that nothing but misfortune could come to St. Augustine from a break between the heads of these two powerful orders of the Church. His keen mind saw Prevatt as the instigator of the trouble and he scowled at the renegade who was secretly gloating over the turn affairs had taken.

Father Salvandi saw that further discussion with the Jesuit was useless, so he turned to Menendez.

"Adelentado, I wish to advise you of some facts in the case that should properly come before your office. This man Prevatt, who has been referred to as a devout member of the Holy Church, accuses Roget of villanously assaulting him for revenge. I will say in the defense of Roget that the assault was in the defense of a woman, and one who has only recently been received in the Church of which he claims to be so devout a member."

"Why did you not tell me this in the first place?" Menendez

sternly demanded of Prevatt, who saw that the truth would serve the best.

"I am in love with the woman," he replied humbly. "I was only telling her of my love when the heretic, in his jealous rage, assaulted me."

The Jesuit had for the moment been deeply chagrined by the accusation against his protege, but Prevatt's assertion put an entirely different aspect upon the case.

"Do you wish to marry this young woman?" he asked Prevatt.

"I do," the renegade replied, beaming upon his benefactor.

"Then it is all beside the question, the young woman is a Catholic; there can be no union with the heretic and Captain Prevatt is justified in saving her from him." Father Salvandi was about to speak, but the Jesuit saw his purpose and raised his hand in protest, "one minute and I will finish," he said. "Since I have made out my case in this particular, I will now bring an accusation against this heretic which is covered specifically by the Directorium Inquisitorum. I charge him with sorcery among the savages and young women of the colony by drawing the short straw."

Father Salvandi looked at Prevatt, but his countenance in no way displayed the utter contempt he had for the renegade. In order to revenge himself upon Roget he would drag the name of Juanita Acosta into the Inquisition, for under the law she was equally guilty with Roget of practicing sorcery with the savages. He thought of Isabel Mendrano and what his duty compelled him to do in her case, and now what was in store for her son. He groaned inwardly for the laws of the Inquisition were clear. Under Torquemada's Code of Terror guilt meant "abandonment to the secular arm" which was the ecclesiastical equivalent to a sentence of death by fire. Fortunately, the code also prescribed that guilt was "left to the conscience of the inquisitors."

He wondered how much Prevatt had told the Jesuit; surely he had not explained Juanita's part in the sorcery or Father Mendoza would not have made the accusation so boldly. Certainly the Adelentado did not know, for the Dominican knew how dearly Menendez loved his niece and he would not be sitting supinely while she was in such grave danger if he was aware of it. It was well, he thought, for this would place the Adelentado on his side, and he wished to save Roget. Since the disclosure at the door of the chapel he had prayed ardently that the young heretic might renounce his heresies and come into the Church and that his love for Adele might bring it about voluntarily. But now the Jesuit was attempting to force him, as the head of the Inquisition, to bring Roget to trial. Very well, he was a Dominican and Mendoza was Jesuit, he would see who was the stronger.

He turned to Menendez. "I regret that Father Mendoza has taken this action which means death by the flames for those found guilty, but I presume he has done so advisely. I further presume that he also knows that his charge of sorcery against the heretic Roget also holds against Dona Juanita Acosta, the niece of the Adelentado of Florida."

Both Pedro Menendez and Father Mendoza, the Jesuit, sat bolt upright in their seats and stared in open mouth astonishment at the Dominican.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ADELENTADO

Pedro Menendez was not often taken unawares, in fact he had schooled himself to meet every situation without display of emotion and prided himself upon his impassivity of countenance. He believed he had the faculty developed to the superlative degree, but the sudden announcement of the Dominican that Juanita Acosta was guilty of sorcery, the direful consequences of which he was fully cognizant, for the moment shattered his self control. The one tender spot in the nature of Pedro Menendez was his intense love for his niece. Could Father Salvandi be jesting? He surely would not treat so serious a subject lightly, but the face of the priest told him nothing.

Did the Jesuit know that in charging Roget of sorcery he was also accusing Juanita? If so what was his motive? The Adelentado's brain flashed over his experiences with Father Mendoza seeking for a reason for revenge upon the part of the priest but the search of his memory store revealed nothing that bore the semblance of ill will. All their relations had been most cordial. If the Jesuit thought his devotion to duty required him to put Juanita to the rack or to condemn her to the flames, he did not know Pedro Menendez. It was all very well to stretch the bones of heretics and burn them, but not so with the child he had loved since she was a baby.

He had seen one heretic on the rack and he had decided that it was worse than the stake. It was an old Jew, one of the New Christians as the baptized Jews and their descendants were termed—who had renounced the religion of their fathers

and embraced the Catholic faith to save his property and had been caught secretly practicing certain Jewish rites. Agents of the Inquisition had watched his chimney and found that smoke did not issue therefrom on certain Jewish fast days and investigating found that he did not eat on those days. So he had been found guilty of rejudaizing. Menendez had seen him stretched on the rack and had heard his groans as well as his strangling gurgles as he suffered the torments of the escalera or water torture. Many a time had he witnessed the auto-da-fe and seen young and old, male and female consumed by the flames. But these were not his own blood kin, he had no interest in them, the scenes only excited his curiosity and an intense religious fervor. But now at the thought of his beautiful Juanita undergoing these tortures, he saw red and his teeth ground as the jaws were set. It should not be.

But the keen brain of Pedro Menendez knew that an attempt to thwart the will of the Church was a dangerous thing to do and he must not show his hand until he actually knew that he must fight to save Juanita. Unless it was necessary, why let it be said that the Adelentado of Florida had attempted to stifle an inquiry of the Church? He would wait to see what move the Jesuit would make.

In a moment Father Mendoza recovered from his surprise, and turned to Prevatt, his manner entirely changed toward his protege. "You did not tell me this," he said sternly.

"I did not know that Dona Juanita was guilty of sorcery," whined Prevatt.

The answer gave the Jesuit courage to inquire, "Then who does know that she is guilty of sorcery?"

"I know that she was equally guilty with Roget," the Dominican promptly replied.

"Then you would have brought the accusation against her?" questioned Father Mendoza secretly rejoicing that he had the chance to ask the question.

"No," Father Salvandi replied calmly, "for I did not regard the occurrence of sufficient importance. I spoke to Dona Catalina regarding it, asking her to warn Dona Juanita of the danger. I thought that was sufficient."

"But the heretic, did you warn him also?" Father Mendoza asked blandly.

The Dominican did not answer the question, but addressed the Adelentado. "I do not see that the presence of Prevatt is necessary. I think he has done enough mischief for one morning."

Menendez agreed heartily, but he would not risk incurring the displeasure of the Jesuit. "I am sure that Father Mendoza will not object to Captain Prevatt's retiring," he answered suavely. "It is the usual custom to discuss such important matters in private."

It was the way the Adelentado put it that made Father Mendoza agree for the manner of the Dominican had nettled him and his first impulse was to insist that Prevatt remain. He agreed, however, and the renegade retired, much to his own relief.

When he had gone Father Salvandi gave an account of the entire occurrence, not failing to dwell upon the motive of Prevatt in informing the Jesuit priest.

"Now, Father Mendoza, do you wish to press the charges against Dona Juanita?" he concluded.

"No," replied the other, "for as the case is stated, Dona Juanita is not guilty, but her innocence makes the heretic more culpable. It was he who caused the young woman to engage in the diabolical enterprise."

Before Father Salvandi could speak, Menendez interposed. The assertion of Father Mendoza had made his way clear. It relieved Juanita of the charge of sorcery and he was willing that the accusation should stand against the heretic provided nothing was done until he had consummated his plans wherein

Roget would be useful.

"Father Mendoza," he said solemnly, "I appreciate your worthy efforts in behalf of the colony, your ardent hopes for its success and your judgment in all matters. It shall be as you say, provided it is agreeable to Father Salvandi who, as head of the Order of Saint Dominic, has control of the Inquisition." He cast an appealing glance at Father Salvandi who caught his meaning. The Dominican did not speak but nodded his head in assent.

The Adelentado's usual good fortune attended him. At that moment Captain Bartolome Menendez appeared at the door of the hut, which was being used as a temporary office and requested a moment's audience on a subject of great importance. Menendez knew that his brother would not interrupt him except that the matter was urgent.

"Speak," he commanded.

"A messenger from Satouriana, the Indian Chief, is here and as I am aware of your great desire to have peace with the savage, I thought it important that I advise you at once."

"It is well," Menendez said, willing enough to divert the conversation to other channels, "I am sure the reverend fathers will be interested in hearing the message of the savage chief. Send for Roget the interpreter and have him here at once."

"Captain Roget is with the Indian now," Bartolome replied

The Adelentado bowed to the priests, "Then with your permission we will bid them enter."

Both acquiesced and Roget and Olata were escorted into the room by Captain Bartolome Menendez.

Roget saluted the Adelentado and bowed respectfully to the priests. "Olata, son of Satouriana, mighty cacique of the Tumucuan, comes with a message to the Adelentado," he said solemnly. "Tomorrow when the sun is above the sea, Satouriana will visit the white cacique and pow wow with him to make a treaty of peace."

Menendez bowed to Olata, and said to Roget, "Bid Olata, son of Satouriana welcome, and say to him that the Adelentado of Florida will gladly pow wow with the great cacique to make a treaty of peace."

Roget repeated the words to the Indian, and Menendez presented him with a necklace of glass beads and a small mirror, which delighted Olata very much, and Roget as well, for what pleased his red skin brother, pleased him.

Captain Bartolome, Roget and the Indian then retired, and the Adelentado turned to Father Mendoza. Fortune had brought the Indian just at the right moment to emphasize the point he was about to make. "Most reverend Father," he said, "you have just seen that which is to my mind the beginning of the implanting of the Holy Gospel in this land, in order that the Indians may be enlightened and come to the knowledge of the Holy Catholic faith of Jesus Christ, Our Lord, as it is preached in the Roman Church. The heretic Roget has great influence with these savages, speaking their language fluently, as you have seen. It seems to me that it behooves us to take advantage of it and not allow it to pass by, for with his help we shall make a treaty of peace with the Indians and learn their language. Later when these things have been done, and the heretic is of no further use to us, you can bring your charges against him before the Inquisition. It is only for the cause of the Church and that the word of the Blessed Redeemer may be carried to the savages, that I ask you to delay until that time."

The Jesuit could not resist this appeal, for he, like all the professed, was bound by the fourth vow, from which only the Pope could dispense, requiring him to go wherever the Pope should send him for missionary duty. Menendez well knew this and that spreading the Gospel among the Indians was Father Mendoza's purpose in Florida. But the priest wished to make doubly sure that his plans would not eventually fail and that

the words of Prevatt regarding the power of the Dominican should not come true.

"It is agreeable to me that the life of the heretic should be spared as long as it is of value to the Church," he agreed readily. "The ends justify that, but as soon as he has performed his service he shall go to the rack."

"Provided he is found guilty," Father Salvandi added calmly.

"But your own testimony would convict him," Father Mendoza came back promptly.

Menendez secretly ground his teeth in rage. He thought he had everything settled amicably. He was preparing to break his own oath to the heretic and deliver him to the Holy Office in order to satisfy the Jesuit. Why couldn't the Dominican let it rest there and trust to the future? He had the power of the Inquisition in his own hands. It was unlike the astute Father Salvandi to be so aggressive. Why was he so ardently espousing the cause of this heretic, was it antagonism of the Jesuit or his personal interest in Roget?" These were the thoughts of the Adelentado as he arose quickly and said, "I am happy, reverend Fathers, that it is all arranged satisfactorily. The charges against the heretic will stand, but the trial will be postponed to a later date."

"And I trust the time will not be long," Father Mendoza said also rising.

Father Salvandi arose slowly. He was grievously troubled. He saw the menace that hung over Roget and he determined to redouble his efforts to have him renounce voluntarily. He would see Juanita and Adele and urge them, to do likewise. He even thought of again making a personal appeal to Roget, but he remembered the result of the last one and he shrank from the ordeal.

Menendez was speaking. "I would be pleased to show you both the plans of the new fort and the work already accom-

plished, if you have the time."

The priests expressed their willingness and pleasure and all three went out into the parade, for the hut was within the enclosure of the fort which was being rapidly built. Besides the negro slaves, there was a large force engaged as the Adelentado had apportioned the work among squads of men who were to labor three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon.

His brother, Captain Bartolome Menendez, had personal supervision of the construction, but there was not a detail with which the Adelentado was not familiar. The fortification was really a fort within a fort. A palisade extended from the river, in a semi-circle, completely surrounding the inner fort, except on the river where a sea wall had been built, and on the land side where the outer fortification jutted in to make a gate for the inner fort. This inner fort was triangular in shape with its base lying parallel to the river, fifty paces from the seawall. At each corner of the triangle were bastions, the combined lengths of the faces and the flanks being eighty paces, the same as the distance of the ramparts between the bastions. These ramparts were built of heavy boards and timber strengthened with sand and sod, but the terrepleins, parapets and interior slope which led to the parade, was filled in with coquina rock and shale and covered over with heavy cedar boards. On the right leg of the triangle as one faced the river was the main gate, the outer fortification, leading through it, forming a double defense within. Small gates and posterns led to the open space in the outer fortifications, one of which was false for secret maneuvers. Around the interior of the parade, and attached to the rampart, it was planned to build a cavalier where the soldiers on guard would sleep and where the munitions would be kept.

With much pride, Menendez showed the priests the large guns and where they would be placed on the terreplein or

platform. There were three cannon of twenty-nine quintals and twenty-one pounds with new carriages and wheels and shields of the Royal Arms emplazoned just forward of the trunnions with the inscription, "Felipus Rex." All of these would be placed so as to aim at the bar. There were three half culverins of thirty-one quintals and ten pounds and one saker of twenty-one quintals and sixty-four pounds. One of the half culverins would be placed so as to aim toward the bar, one toward the north shore and the other toward a point inland where an Indian trail came out of the woods. The saker would be aimed at the main street of the settlement of St. Augustine.

"You seem to have provided for every emergency," remarked Father Mendoza.

"It is not all," replied the Adelentado, "at the main gate will be provided a place for arquebuses which will always be loaded and primed, with additional balls and ramrods at hand. At intervals there will be places for pikes and halberds. There will be sentry boxes from which the bar, the shore, the sea and the woods can be plainly seen; there will be bells which will be rung at stated periods answering from one sentinel to another and the match will be kept burning day and night. It is only in such a manner, reverend fathers, that a permanent settlement can be effected in a land beset with so many dangers. Within a few weeks the fort will be completed and it will be a safe defense against either foreign or domestic enemies. Tomorrow I will make a treaty with the Tumucuan chief. With him as an ally, and with these defenses, I will feel safe to go forth upon my voyage of exploration."

Having completed the inspection of the fort, the two priests parted with the usual salutations and apparently on the best of terms. Menendez signed to Father Salvandi that he would speak with him further, and he followed him into the hut.

"There was nothing better I could do for Roget," said the Adelentado when the door was closed. "But I will put a stop

to Prevatt's meddling.

"No," Father Salvandi said thoughtfully, "I admit his conduct is atrocious, but, if you will pardon me, I think it will be a mistake to say anything to him. He will go to Father Mendoza and exaggerate your statements and make more mischief. You will make a martyr of him. Leave him alone, allow him the same privileges which he has always had, and he will destroy himself."

"Perhaps you are right, anyway, we will see."

"Will you speak to Juanita and Adele again, urging them to use their best influence with Roget?" There was a note of appeal in Father Salvandi's voice.

"Yes."

"And tell them of the incident of the morning and to be careful in the future that they do nothing in the presence of Prevatt, however innocent, that will give him grounds to accuse them,"

"You take a great interest in this heretic, Father Salvandi." Menendez's sharp eye was watching the countenance of the priest.

The face of the Dominican did not change a jot. "I have prayed ardently that he may voluntarily renounce his heresies and embrace the true religion," he said fervently.

"I fear he never will."

"Why not?"

"Would you become a heretic under similar conditions?" Menendez asked abruptly.

"No."

"Therein you have given the answer, reverend father. Roget is as sincere as you or I. He is eternally damned, it is true, but I fear he will never be persuaded."

"I will not give up," Father Salvandi said stubbornly.

"I am glad of it, and I hope you will succeed. I like the man and have an agreement with him which I will keep, as long as

he keeps his, provided Father Mendoza will let me. The good priest, however, will make it very hard. You, as head of the Inquisition, will also be put to the test by him. May you have strength to withstand it, for I cannot, the Jesuits are too powerful."

"As long as you are of the same opinion as now, I believe I can withstand the good priest's efforts to destroy Roget."

"My position will not change as long as the heretic keeps faith with me. It is no fault of mine if Father Mendoza forces me to deliver him to the Inquisition. I will regret it, that is all." Menendez shrugged his shoulders and smiled grimly.

But the heretic kept his word faithfully and Satouriana made a treaty of peace with the Adelentado and went away satisfied. Roget advised the Adelentado just as he had advised Ribault, against making an offensive and defensive alliance and also advised Satouriana the same. In the previous case, however, he was looking to the protection of the white men, in this case it was for the protection of the Indians and his own people as well, for he did not want his savage friends to be compelled to go to war at the call of the Spaniards when it might be against the French.

The pow wow was held in the former council house of Ucita who was there, as sanguine as ever, over the new village which Menendez had promised him. Menendez was lavish with his gifts to Satouriana and Olata, who were greatly pleased. Juanita, Adele and Catalina together with the captains witnessed the highly colored scene with the sagamores, juavas, and warriors surrounding the great cacique. Prevatt was in the back ground nursing his hatred for Roget who acted as interpreter, much the same as he did in the negotiations between Ribault and the Tumucuan chief.

Both Juanita and Adele were very proud of Roget and the great respect shown him by the savages, and Menendez, Father Salvandi and even Father Mendoza were impressed.

It was a well satisfied and much relieved Adelentado who went to his home shortly after midday. The pipe of peace had been smoked and the Indians had departed in good spirits. The menace of an attack by them, which hung over him since Coacoochee had cast the arrow at his fleet was now removed.

At the noon day meal, he listened to Juanita and Adele discussing the meeting with the Indians, for both were beginning to be able to speak the vernacular of the other in a limited way, and when they reached the point they could go no further, Menendez delighted to assist, for even he was improving his French under Adele's help. He readily noticed that Roget in their eyes, was the hero of the occasion.

After the meal the Adelentado went beneath the trees that surrounded the house, where in the shade of a bay was hung a hamaca made of woven palmetto and presented to him by Ucita. Here it was his custom to take his siesta. Juanita always sat with him and talked to him or played the guitarra until he dozed and then she would quietly slip away. These were moments which both looked forward to. They were moments when the hard nature of the Spaniard seemed to grow tender as if warmed by the loving heart of his devoted niece.

On the previous day, he had told her of the complaint of Father Mendoza and the messages of Father Salvandi, warning her and asking her to redouble her efforts to aid in the conversion of Roget. Today he asked her how she was progressing with the heretic, and she told him how the evening before she had attempted to persuade Roget to come to the Church and that he had listened very attentively and had finally told her why he could never become a Catholic. He hated the Church because it had condemned his mother to the stake.

"And uncle," she continued, "it all happened in Avilles and his mother belonged to the Mendrano family."

The Adelentado was drowsy but, the name aroused him.

"Mendrano! I wonder if it could have been Isabel Men-

drano?" he asked with interest.

"Yes, that was his mother's name."

"Isabel Mendrano," he mused, "I remember the case well. There was a boy who was spirited away by the heretics. So that was Roget."

Memory also immediately connected Father Salvandi with the case. Menendez again closed his eyes and Juanita stole softly away, but the Adelentado did not sleep. His brain was active, thinking of his childhood and the later days of service in the cause of the King and how he had arisen to power and influence. Then he thought of his days of adversity when he had languished in prison at Seville, overthrown by his enemies, and later was restored by the King and made General of the fleet of the Indies.

Now, he was Adelentado and Captain General of the Coast and Country of Florida under a contract with the King of Spain, the territory covering all the lands between the twenty-fifth parallel of latitude north to the sixtieth parallel and east and west from ocean to ocean. This covered practically all of the continent of North America and he had nearly four years to settle it for his contract read, "You must do what you can within this year, and the rest within three years, the period wherein by this asiento you obligate yourself to settle the aforesaid country."

He had no conception of the stupendous task before him but he had made excellent progress thus far and had established two settlements, one at St. Augustine and one at San Mateo, although he had been in the country less than a month. He would go forth shortly on his voyage of exploration and he had prepared for it by organizing his town government in St. Augustine so that it would function properly during his absence. He had appointed his brother, Bartolome, alcaide and a junta or council of citizens, which together with the captains formed a cabildo or town corporation, combining the civil and military

authority, which would govern the municipality during his absence. He had prepared rules or ordinances to guide them, even setting forth among other things the proper daily ration which should be given to each family from the general store, the amount of land each should cultivate and the amount of seed each should plant.

The way was now open for the conversion of the Indians and soon Father Mendoza's missionaries could go amongst them. The heretics had been expelled and now the three objects of the expedition were being successfully accomplished. Would that his enemies at the Court of King Phillip could know this.

And as he thought over these things, he knew that it was his own indomitable will and energy that had made it all possible. His own and his family's fortune, which he had gambled in the contract with the King, could only be saved by his vigilance and determination. Fort Caroline would not have been captured had he listened to his captains, the services of the efficient heretic he would not have now if he should listen to the words of one of the priests. He would continue as he had begun, bending the powerful to his will, destroying, if necessary where his progress was impeded, for there should be no obstacle in the way of the development of Florida. Sacrifice of life would mean nothing in his scheme of colonization. His would be a permanent settlement in this land of sunshine and flowers and he would bequeath to progeny a name unrivalled by the great explorers and colonizers of history.

And as he thought of the priests, his mind turned to Roget, and to the Dominican's ardent espousal of the cause of the heretic. Father Salvandi must know that he was the son of Isabel Mendrano. A strange fatality, indeed, that it should fall to the lot of one man to be compelled to condemn to the stake the woman he loved and the son who might have been his. The arm of the Church was all powerful, a score of years might

intervene, thousands of miles of ocean might divide but the heretic could not escape.

But determinedly putting these thoughts from his mind the Adelentado forced himself to sleep.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DUNES OF MATANZAS

The Adelentado had not slumbered long when he was awakened by Juanita. He had given orders that he should never be disturbed at his siesta, but Captain Bartolome Menendez had come with Roget and two Indians bearing important news, so important that Bartolome insisted that his brother be called at once.

"Tell them to come here," Menendez said lazily.

The four approached the hammock.

"These two savages came to the fort a short time ago and made signs that they would speak," said Bartolome. "I sent for Roget and the information was so important that I came to you immediately."

"Speak," the Adelentado commanded to Roget, "what is it they have told you?"

"They say," replied Roget, "that four leagues to the south some white men are beyond an arm of the sea, which they cannot cross. They think they are Spaniards or people of your tribe, as they say."

"How many are there?" asked Menendez.

Roget interpreted the question to the Indians. There was a moment's consultation between the two savages, in which they argued as to the number. Finally they agreed that there were about thirty, which information Roget transmitted to the Adelentado. They said further that they had not spoken to the strangers as the inlet or arm of the sea was between them, but they were evidently attempting to reach St. Augustine.

"Some of our ships bound for San Domingo may have been wrecked," suggested the Adelentado.

"Or perhaps a vessel from Hispaniola," Bartolome conjectured.

Roget thought it strange that it did not occur to them that it might be Ribault or some of his men.

"Any way we must learn who they are," Menendez said rising. "Roget provide the Indians with food, and then await me at the fort. I will bring them gifts when I come."

Roget departed with the savages leaving the Adelentado and his brother together.

"I would not suggest it in the presence of the heretic, but these strangers may be the French," said Menendez.

"That thought had also occurred to me," replied the alcaide.

"I will take forty soldiers and go to reconnoiter. Have them ready for me within an hour," commanded the Adelentado. "These people are probably at the inlet which we call Matanzas, so provide rations for five days. I will take Diego Florez de Valdes and Father Salvandi with me."

"Will you take Roget, the interpreter?" Bartolome asked.

The Adelentado thought for a moment. "No," he replied, "the Indians can show us the way by signs. He will not be needed."

Within an hour the expedition was ready to start. Nothing was said to Roget in reference to his going but the Adelentado ordered him to instruct the Indians to lead them the way which would be the most accessible yet would enable them to approach without being discovered. The Indians said that this would be by boat to a point about three leagues to the south and thence overland to the sea, and down the beach. With this information, the Indians could signify the proper route as they proceeded. So Roget, in company with Juanita and Adele, watched the expedition leave the pier.

The boats containing the officers and the soldiers were rowed

along the channel of the Matanzas River which separated the mainland from an island that bordered the sea. Menendez and Father Salvandi with two Indians and ten soldiers were in the forward boat. At a point designated by the savages they disembarked and marched across the island to the beach which they reached at sunset. Then they proceeded south until dark when they bivouacked upon the sands.

They could see the reflection of fires in the distance. The Adelentado sent two soldiers to reconnoiter, who returned at midnight reporting that the strangers were beyond the Inlet and could not be reached. He thereupon ordered an officer with ten soldiers to hasten back the way they came and to bring one of the boats around by way of the river to the Inlet and to secrete it out of sight of the strangers. He charged them to reach the place before daylight as he and the rest of the company would be there.

He then marched along the beach to the inlet and placed his men in the bushes that grew in profusion an arquebus' shot from the water, warning Valdes to see that sufficient sentinels were posted. He and Father Salvandi then lay upon the ground and soon the gentle swash of the surf had lulled them to sleep.

Matanzas Inlet is a narrow break in the sand dunes that line the coast to the south of St. Augustine. It is an estuary, too shallow for large boats, which connects the ocean with the inland creeks and bayous which are themselves merely arms of the sea, the largest of which is the Matanzas River extending north to the inlet of St. Augustine.

The sand dunes are covered with scrub trees or bushes that make excellent cover for hiding. As the first streak of dawn appeared, the soldiers arrived with the boat, which they concealed around the bend in the river. When the light broke over the inlet there was not a sign of life on the northern shore but the sharp eyes of the Spaniards from their place of concealment could see the band on the south side many of whom

were engaged in searching for food in the shallows along the shore. Above them, on a sand dune waved the blue banner of France.

Menendez said to Father Salvandi.

"Just as I thought, they are heretics and there are at least two hundred of them. We are outnumbered four to one. I understood there were only about thirty. I wonder if that heretic Roget, purposely misinformed me."

"I would not think so," Father Salvandi replied, "he has never lied to you yet. Possibly the Indians misinformed him."

The Adelentado glanced sharply at the priest. Now he knew the reason for his defense of the heretic.

"Anyway, what is done is done," he said, "and I must not let them know the smallness of my company."

So he ordered his men to stand on the outer edge of the wood on top of the sand dunes so that it might appear there was a large company encamped there. Then he had one of the soldiers exchange clothes with him and he went with some of the soldiers for the boat and had them row him about two-thirds of the way across the inlet, signalling that he would speak to those on the other shore.

And straightway a soldier swam out to his boat.

"What men are you?" Menendez demanded.

"Followers of Jean Ribault, Viceroy of the King of France," answered the swimmer in Spanish for he was a Gascon from San Juan de Luz.

"Who is your commander?"

"Captain La Grange."

"Where is Jean Ribault?" inquired Menendez.

"He is following with a larger company."

"Are you Catholics or Lutherans?"

"All Lutherans," and the swimmer continued, "my captain desires to know who you are."

"Tell him I am Pedro Menendez, Adelentado of Florida for

King Phillip of Spain, and I am come with my soldiers to find out what strangers are doing here."

The man swam to the south shore and returned shortly stating that Captain La Grange and four gentlemen desired safe conduct in his boat to speak with him.

"Tell your captain that I will send the boat," Menendez replied, "and I pledge my word that he may cross in safety."

So the Adelentado returned to the north shore of the inlet and sent the boat across to bring them over while he changed his clothes donning a flexible coat of mail beneath his shirt and doublet.

With Father Salvandi, Valdes and twelve soldiers he met the Frenchmen very courteously and invited them to breakfast with him, while according to his orders his followers kept moving along the edge of the woods as if there was a large force encamped beyond.

With the Gascon acting as interpreter, Captain La Grange told Menendez of their misfortunes, how their ship had been driven before the hurricane and wrecked upon a cape fifty leagues to the south, that Admiral Ribault with the other ships had also been wrecked and were following them but being a much larger force moved more slowly.

"Are you Catholics or Lutherans?" asked Menendez, who already knew, but never failed to propound the ominous question.

"We are all of the New Religion," La Grange replied.

When the Frenchmen had satisfied their hunger, for they were almost famished, Menendez addressed them. "Gentlemen, your fort has been captured and your people have all been killed save two whom I saw fit to spare. Lest you will not believe me, I will show you many things which my soldiers have from there." Whereupon he had some of his men display articles of plunder taken from Fort Carolina and when they had examined these, he continued, "Do you now believe what

I say is true?"

"We believe you," La Grange said sadly, "and we beseech you to sell us ships and supplies that we may return to France. We will pay you fifty thousand ducats, for I can raise that amount among my company, many of whom are gentlemen of wealth."

"I do not doubt that you will do what you say," responded the Adelentado, "although I am a poor soldier, but I do not wish to appear covetous. When it is my duty to be liberal and merciful, I will do so without monetary consideration. Furthermore I have not the ships to spare."

"Then may you grant us our lives and we will remain with you, paying what is justly due, until ships may come from France, for our countries are at peace and our Kings are brothers and friends."

"All I can say," replied Menendez, "is that if you will give up your arms and place yourself under my mercy I shall do with you whatever it may please God to exact for me to do."

The Frenchmen consulted together for a few minutes and La Grange again addressed the Adelentado through the interpreter.

"Pedro Menendez, we are starving and must yield to your mercy. If you will send me across, we will deliver our arms to you and the men can follow later."

"It is well," Menendez said and he ordered Valdes to take the boat and twenty soldiers and to go with the captain and bring over the arms and banners first and to return and bring ten Frenchmen at each trip thereafter, and it was done as he ordered.

The boat had scarce left the shore when Menendez withdrew behind a sand dune so he could not be seen and gave his commands that as each company of ten landed they should first be given food and then brought to him.

Father Salvandi looked upon the scene with interest, wonder-

ing what the Adelentado would regard the will of God. He knew that the supplies at St. Augustine were not sufficient to provide for its own population for a protracted period and that they could not well afford to entertain so large a company of guests except to their own detriment. Nor did he see how Menendez could spare the ships to send them to France. But this was a matter for the civil authority of which Menendez was the chief, and it was no affair of his. The priest's duty was to administer to those who needed his services.

Within a half hour La Grange returned with two banners, sixty arquebuses, twenty pistols, a quantity of swords and bucklers, helmets and breastplates. La Grange and the eight Frenchmen who came over with him were taken to Menendez, after those who had not been fed were given nourishment. La Grange announced that all the two hundred and eight in the company had agreed to give themselves up to the mercy of the Spaniards, whereupon Menendez said to him, "I have but few soldiers and they are not very experienced. As you are many, if you are not bound it would be an easy thing for you to avenge yourself upon us for the killing of your people when we took your fort, and so it is necessary that you march with your hands tied behind you to a place four leagues from here where I have my camp."

As he finished speaking an armed soldier went to each of the Frenchmen and bound them with ropes. Then each was asked if he was a Catholic or Lutheran. Those who were Lutherans were then marched over the dunes to a distance of a cross bow shot where they were to wait for the coming of the others.

As each ten disembarked they were fed and then led to the Adelentado where the same statement was made to them as they were bound, and the same question afterward propounded. There were only eight of the two hundred and eight who declared themselves to be Catholics. These were turned over to

Father Salvandi and led apart in a separate group out of sight of the others.

Throughout the long day the ferry went back and forth bearing human cargoes. Under the trees the number of Frenchmen slowly increased—prisoners of Spain on the dunes of Matanzas. They talked of France and wondered how long it would be before they would again see its shores.

It was late in the afternoon when the twentieth trip had been made and all were across. Then the Adelentado again had food and drink served to those who hungered and thirsted. And as the sun was setting, he took with him twenty of his own soldiers armed with long knives, and stationed them between two sand dunes a short distance to the north where the prisoners were supposed to march. There he drew a line with his jinet, marking a place in the sand. His commands horrified even these hardened mercenaries.

Returning to the unsuspecting prisoners he gave the order for them to march.

But no Frenchman who had not recanted crossed that line alive.

In the dusk of the evening the Spaniards departed and silence reigned over the dunes of Matanzas.

It was dawn the following morning before Menendez, Father Salvandi, Valdes, the forty Spanish soldiers, and the eight Frenchmen who had recanted, reached St. Augustine. But it was in time for early mass. The Adelentado himself joined heartily in singing the *Te Deum Laudamus*.

CHAPTER XXV

THE RETURN OF RIBAUT

During the absence of the Adelentado, Roget spent most of his time in the society of Juanita and Adele, but more with the former than the latter, for while the duenna was busily engaged in giving Adele her Spanish lesson Juanita had suggested a stroll to the pier which had culminated in an entire morning in the woods. Juanita said it was a shocking thing for a Spanish girl to do, going out unchaperoned, but customs in this new country were different from Spain and that Catalina could not get very angry with her anyway.

Nor did she seem at all willing to leave Roget and Adele together. It was true that he enjoyed the society of Juanita, but he did wish to have a few words with Adele alone, for there were several questions he would like to propound to her, but it seemed impossible. Of course, he could question her in French in the presence of the Spanish girl, but he found that Juanita immediately interposed her objections to his speaking in a language of which she was ignorant, though she was quite willing to monopolize the conversation in her own vernacular, in which Adele was only a tyro.

Roget accredited Juanita's manoeuvres to be with him alone to her religious zealotry and her desire to convert him and he watched her endeavors with secret amusement, but to her arguments he was adamant. Yet he did not resent her appeals; he rather liked her earnestness. There was a charm in her manner, he thought, as they sat upon the grass under a leafy bower and she held his hand, her large brown eyes

looking into his, as a sweet smile played about her lips. It pleased him that one so lovely should take such an interest in him.

It occurred to him that his becoming a Catholic would put an end to her proselyting which, in itself, was an argument why he should remain a heretic. But he did not tell her so; he merely met her appeals with questions which she could not answer, yet the questions seemed to give her courage to persevere.

He regarded these interviews, however, only as harmless diversions, for his heart was Adele's, though he knew there could be naught between them as long as she remained a Catholic. He longed, however, to ask her again if it was really true that she had voluntarily renounced the religion for which she had suffered so much. He had given it considerable thought and, recalling her story of her constancy when, held prisoner in France by the followers of the Duke of Guise, even under persecution she had remained steadfast to the faith, he did not understand how she could voluntarily recant now. If he could only see her alone, he believed he could learn the reason for her strange act.

And the opportunity came the day after the Adelentado's departure. They were beneath the bay tree where hung the hammock in which Adele and Juanita sat, the Spanish girl playing the guitar and singing love songs. Roget sat upon a wooden bench that leaned against the trunk of the tree. Catalina called Juanita to come to the house, and though it was evident that she did not wish to go, there was nothing else for her to do.

It was the first time that Louis and Adele had been alone since the morning in the powder house at Fort Caroline, and both realized it.

"Adele," Roget said softly, "tell me truly, did you really renounce our religion voluntarily?"

She knew what the answer would mean. She, too, had thought it all out. She would give her life to throw herself into his arms and tell him it was all a lie, that she was still true to her faith. She had already been tempted to do so, as she had seen the Spanish girl daily falling more in love with Roget and endeavoring to take her lover from her. But she knew the consequences. If she confessed to him, just as the Adelentado had said, Roget would not allow her to sell her soul for his life and Menendez would know that she had broken her promise, then Roget would be hung. It was hard, but deep in her heart was the sweet delight of sacrifice. She was saving the life of the man she loved.

Her face was colorless and her voice trembled, but she forced a smile as she said, "Of course it was voluntarily, Louis, just as I told you."

"It is hard to believe," he groaned, "I had to hear it again from your lips."

She would not trust herself to say more.

Juanita returned and eyed them suspiciously. She noted Adele's palor and Roget's solemn countenance.

"What were you talking about?" she asked him in Spanish, "you spoke softly, but I could hear you."

"I was asking Adele if she recanted voluntarily?" he answered truthfully, but she did not believe him.

"Is religion your sole topic of conversation when alone with a lady?" She laughed, but Roget thought there was a note of sarcasm.

"Not always," he answered drily.

Adele, with a woman's intuition caught the significance of Juanita's attitude, if not the meaning of her words. She knew that the Spanish girl schemed to be with Louis alone and resented her presence. Besides the pangs of jealousy which rankled within her, it was very uncomfortable, this being the third party, when she was not wanted, being compelled

to sit supinely and listen to a language she did not understand. The prolixity of Juanita's discourse would have been exasperating enough, she thought, if she could have comprehended its meaning, but the continuous rattle of nothingness was wearing on her nerves. She arose and with an apology in French addressed to Roget, went into the house.

Juanita looked at the retreating form in surprise. She had caught the word "pardon" in the French vernacular and she also understood a manner which is the universal language of the female. "Adele is angry with me," she said, but there was no evidence of regret in her voice.

"Why should she be angry with you?" Roget asked innocently.

"Because . . . she thinks I like you, I suppose."

"Oh, no, I don't think that."

"You love her," Juanita said bluntly.

Roget looked at her a moment and said seriously, "Yes, I love Adele, but she is a Catholic."

Juanita's brow puckered, "You mean . . ." but she hesitated, hardly knowing what to say.

"I mean I could not marry a Catholic," he said, answering her uncompleted question.

"Then, if she were not a Catholic you would marry her?"

"I mean if we were of the same religion I would marry her." He did not intend to put it so bluntly as it sounded; he would give his all if such a dream could come true.

"I see," Juanita scarcely breathed the words, but they expressed her inmost feelings. She understood what he meant. She sat swinging in the hammock idly strumming her guitar. If Roget should be converted Adele would win him; if he remained a heretic she never could.

It did not occur to Juanita that she could become a heretic. Her religion was a part of her life; she had grown up with it from her infancy, it was like the air which she lived in and

breathed. Others might be converted to another religion, but she never could; she could never recant. But she loved Roget and she wondered if her love for him was not greater than her desire to see him become a Catholic and belong to another.

They sat for several minutes and neither spoke. Finally she broke the silence. "Do you think you will ever recant, Senor Roget?" she asked naively.

"No," he answered without hesitation.

"Why not?"

"Because I believe in my faith and in it I will live and die."

"You know, I like you because you are so sincere, Senor Roget. You could not lie, could you?"

Roget laughed. "I would not say I could not lie, Dona Juanita, but I do not like to. It is not only wrong, it is distasteful."

"That is it," she said quickly, "you have expressed it exactly, it is distasteful to you. You are innately good."

"You are trying to flatter me, senorita."

"No, Senor Louis, I could not flatter you. Let me sing you an Asturian love song, how a lover died because he would not lie."

Roget listened and applauded, but neither thought how well the words fitted the case of the heretic, who would not sacrifice the faith he held more sacred than his love for a woman.

On the following morning Roget arose wondering if Menendez had returned. He would go to his headquarters and report, and if he was not there he would watch the men placing the heavy guns on the terrepiens, for even if the Adelantado was absent the work went steadily on.

As he followed the road through the woods that led from the barracks to the fort he met Jean Prevatt. He and the renegade had not spoken since the night in the dungeon, but this morning Prevatt did not pass him by as usual with a sneer or with bowed head and frowning brow. Now he met him

squarely and there was a jauntiness in his air.

"Monsieur Roget will be pleased to learn that yesterday the Adelentado killed Captain La Grange and two hundred heretics," he said with a diabolical grin.

Roget looked at him too astounded to speak. Had Menendez found the strangers to be Frenchmen and massacred them?

"It will be Monsieur Roget's turn next," the renegade continued malevolently.

Roget's first impulse was to pass on without noticing the traitor, but here was something too important to be overlooked. He could not understand Prevatt's motive for informing him after all that had occurred unless it was for the purpose of incensing him.

Prevatt evidently misconstrued Roget's silence. "And I am now the interpreter for Captain Bartholome," he went on with glee, "I have just talked to eight Frenchmen whom the Adelentado spared. They will be put to work on the fort tomorrow."

Roget wanted to learn more, so he smothered his resentment and said as calmly as he could, "Was Alphonse Darboux with La Grange?"

The mention of the name seemed to anger the renegade. "So you wish to bear a message to Mademoiselle. Perhaps he was killed and perhaps he was not, but you'll never know, for they have orders to tell you nothing. With these words Prevatt turned and walked away, his laughter ringing in Roget's ears. When a few yards away he called back, "You'll be next, Monsieur Roget, you'll be next."

Roget went on toward the fort. Was Prevatt telling the truth? Had Menendez massacred the Frenchmen? Were Alphonse and Ernest Darboux among the number? These were the questions he asked himself. Probably it was all a lie concocted by Prevatt to worry him, surely forty Spaniards

could not so easily kill two hundred Frenchmen. But he must see, he would soon learn if there were really eight Frenchmen in St. Augustine.

Nearing the fort he met Olata who came toward him hurriedly and Roget knew that something unusual had happened. He had not expected to see the Indian until the following day.

"My white brother wants Olata?" the Indian exclaimed, even before the usual salutation.

"No," Roget said with surprise. "I did not send for you."

The Indian looked at him in bewilderment.

"Why?" the white man continued.

"Olato's mother came to him in the night and said, 'Go to your white brother, he will need you during the day!'"

Roget experienced a creepy sensation. He had always listened to Olata's stories of the supernatural with charitable condescension, until the savage had been sent to save him from the halter. Since then he had been compelled to admit to himself that he had ceased to be skeptical. Therefore, his first thought was of some pending danger. The words of Prevatt were uppermost in his mind. He told the Indian what he had heard.

"I must find the Frenchmen if they are here," he continued, "they will tell me if it is true."

He did find them, eight Breton sailors who were delighted to meet someone who could speak their language, for they had only seen two, one of these was on the boat which had ferried them across the inlet on the day previous, and the other one an interpreter who had announced that they would be compelled to work on the fort.

From the sailors Roget learned of the disaster to Ribault's fleet, how it had been wrecked on a cape far to the south, only one caravel being saved, which was brought into an inlet and beached. Ribault had determined to return to Fort Caroline by land. They had proceeded north along the shore, sub-

sisting on shellfish and cabbage palmetto, until they had arrived at an inlet and been rowed across by some friendly Indians. On account of the time taken, a company of two hundred and eight, under Captain La Grange, of which they were a part, had pushed on and three days before had come to another inlet where they were building a raft when the Spaniards appeared on the other side and arrangements were made to bring them over.

"Where is Captain La Grange and the others?" inquired Roget.

"We don't know," answered the leader, "we were in the second boat load and a Spaniard, who spoke a little French, whispered to one of us, 'if you want to save your skins better turn Catholics.' We talked it over and eight out of ten on the boat decided we would do so if necessary. The other two had always been Huguenots so they wouldn't change. When we reached the shore we were well treated, given plenty to eat, and were asked if we were Catholics or Lutherans. We told them we were Catholics, at which they seemed very glad and took us to a good priest who treated us kindly. We have not seen the others since."

"Are you really Catholics?" Roget asked.

"We are now, for we think it is better to be a live Catholic than a dead Huguenot."

"Then you were of the New Religion?"

"I was once," the Breton readily replied, "because in La Rochelle business was better as a Huguenot, but here I think business will be better under the Pope."

Roget was disgusted. He could not understand such flagitious insincerity.

"Do you know Chevalier Alphonse Darboux," he asked, for his safety and that of his brother Ernest was, after all, of the most importance to him.

"Yes, but we were not on his ship."

"Where is he?"

"With Admiral Ribault's company; they are about two days behind us."

"On the way to Fort Caroline?"

"Yes."

Roget's mind was made up. He must save Alphonse and Ernest. With Olata he hurried to the barracks to find writing material. He now knew that Olata had come for a purpose, to take the message to Alphonse. After some trouble he was able to obtain what he wished, and stationing Olata at his door to warn him of the approach of the officer who shared his room with him, he wrote the following letter:

"Most magnificent Chevalier Alphonse Darboux.

"I beseech that you do not place yourself or your comrades under the power of the Spaniard, Pedro Menendez, who will surely lead you to slaughter. Believe not his promises for they will be broken. Fort Caroline has been captured and all put to the sword by this blood-thirsty tyrant except those who escaped, and Adele and me, who are here in his camp. La Grange and his men have been cruelly murdered. Therefore, I beseech you let Olata, the bearer of this, lead you, to a place of refuge. If it pleases God, Adele and I may escape and join you. If not, you and your comrades will have escaped death. Send a message to me by the Indian. May our Lord enlighten you so that you may heed this warning and do these things, and may He protect and increase your honor's most magnificent person as I desire it.

"LOUIS."

He carefully folded the letter and placed it in Olata's girdle and said to him: "Go, my brother, and find the brother of Olata's white sister. You knew him at the fort on the Welaka. He is to the south by the sea, one day, two days, perhaps three days journey, with the great white father who comes from the rising sun. When you find him give him this. It

speaks the language of the white man. Then lead him to some place of safety and bring me his message."

The Indian listened very attentively. "Olata will find the brother of Olata's white sister," he said solemnly. "He will lead him to the village of Coacoochee which is two days journey to the south. Then he will return with a message to his white brother."

"And allow no one else to see the message. Keep it hidden until you reach the depths of the forest and go forth to the north as if returning to Saturiba, then turn to the south as if stalking the deer, lest the men of the white cacique may suspect. And may the Great Spirit protect you."

It was well that Roget gave the letter and the instruction to Olata when he did, for as they left the barracks he was met by a soldier with an order from Menendez to report at once. He wondered if the Adelentado had heard of his seeking the writing material and wished to question him concerning that.

He knew the soldier could not understand the language of the Tumucuan, so he bade Olata to go at once, again cautioning him to leave the settlement as if he was going to Saturiba.

"Olata will go, his mother will warn him of danger," the Indian disappeared in the woods toward the north.

Roget covertly watched the soldier, but saw that he suspected nothing. He was accustomed to seeing the son of the great Tumucuan Chief with the French Captain and had heard the story of how the savage had saved the white man's life, and in what high regard the Adelentado held them both.

At the headquarters of Menendez Roget found the two Indians who had come two days previous and had received a reward for bringing news of the strangers. The crafty Adelentado had dismissed them after they had guided him to Matanzas, for he wanted no prying eyes to see that they might

carry news to Satouriana of the slaughter of the Frenchmen. They had returned to their fishing and from their canoes had noticed the arrival of others at the same spot and had hastened to seek another reward for bringing the information.

"Ask them how many there are," Menendez commanded Roget.

They said that they thought there were more than twice the number that came formerly.

This information caused the Adelentado much concern, for as great as had been his success the close proximity of so large a force of Frenchmen was a menace. He was sure that it was Jean Ribault whom he regarded a wise and courageous leader and whatever might be the condition of the shipwrecked company their numbers made them formidable. He had sent part of his garrison to San Mateo and he did not want to leave St. Augustine unguarded, for his fort was not over half completed and his guns were not yet in place. He could not afford to take more than one hundred and fifty soldiers to destroy probably four hundred Frenchmen, and they must be destroyed, that he had already decided. He must, therefore, resort to strategy and in Roget he saw an instrument for his designs.

He did not suppose the heretic knew of the massacre of Captain La Grange and his men, for he had given strict orders that he should not be told, but he knew that Roget would think it strange if nothing was said of the arrival of the men, to which the Indians had just referred and concerning the expedition which he saw depart. His suspicions might be aroused if he was not told something.

He ordered a soldier to give the Indians presents and dismiss them and he then said to Roget: "Captain, there were two hundred and eight of your countrymen who came to this same arm of the sea two days ago and asked to be brought over. I granted their request and fed them, for they were

hungry. They wished to be brought here, but as you know we have no place to accommodate them, so I only brought eight who were Catholics. I took the arms from the others and left them there where they are now. But it concerns me much what to do with so large a company as this one which has just arrived, for I am persuaded that it is Admiral Ribault and his followers. I will be pleased to help them as I did the others and at such time as I am able will send them to their country. But I would be very unwise, as you know, to allow so large a company to come amongst us armed. They could destroy us."

Roget was quite taken back by the frank manner of the Adelentado and the news that Captain La Grange and his men were alive. "I thought you had slain my countrymen, all except the eight who recanted," he said, looking with suspicion upon the Spaniard.

Menendez was astounded that the heretic should be so well informed, but his face displayed nothing of his surprise.

"Who dare slander me in this wise?" he demanded with semblance of righteous indignation.

"Prevatt told me," Roget answered frankly.

Menendez saw that great harm had been done which must be repaired, for he must have the full confidence of the French Captain.

"So you accept the word of this fellow who betrayed you and your countrymen into my hands and from whose advances you were forced to protect the woman you love?"

Roget thought the arraignment was just, the traitor's word was not worthy of consideration. He did not know that Menendez knew of his protecting Adele, but that he should know and commend was to his credit.

"No," replied Roget, "I would not have believed Prevatt, but . . ."

The Adelentado saw that the heretic was not persuaded. He

determined upon a bold move.

"Very well," he interrupted, "I will call the renegade and let him tell you he lied."

He summoned a guard. "Arrest Jean Prevatt, the Frenchman and bring him to me at once," he commanded.

"Now, Captain," he continued, when the guard had departed, "until this miserable meddler comes to prove his statement false I will beg you to believe that I speak truthfully. Captain La Grange and his men are quite safe, I can assure you. Now I want you to help me and also help your countrymen out of their difficult situation. As you know, their fort is destroyed, there is nothing for them to do but to return to their own country. This was what Captain La Grange requested. If they deliver up their arms I will give them safe conduct, but unless they do so I cannot take the risk. If they wish to retain them and fight I will accept the challenge, but I deem it best for our mutual interests that they go peacefully.

Roget looked hard at Menendez. There shot through his mind the memory of the broken pledge at Fort Caroline. The term "safe conduct" had a familiar ring, he associated it with a rough rope about his neck and a choking, strangling sensation. Should he permit his countrymen to trust themselves to the Spaniard? Would he keep his word? Then he recalled the oath administered on the crucifix and how well Menendez had kept that. He could find no fault of the treatment accorded Adele and himself since then. Only such an oath did the Spaniard hold sacred and binding. If he would give such a pledge to Admiral Ribault he and his followers would be safe.

With these thoughts in mind Roget answered, "I cannot say what Admiral Ribault will do, but I will gladly bear him your message, and if you will swear to him upon the crucifix that you will do these things as you say, I will advise him that I think it best under the conditions."

Menendez's eye did not waver as he said in even tone, "I will swear to Jean Ribault on the crucifix that he and his followers will be allowed to join Captain La Grange and his men and that they shall have safe conduct from this country."

"I believe he will accept," Roget said thoughtfully.

"Admiral Ribault should highly regard the advice of so efficient a soldier as yourself," Menendez added soothingly. "You know him well, do you not?"

"I was with him on his first voyage to New France," Roget replied.

The answer pleased Menendez. It appeared that his plans might prove successful.

Two guards entered with Prevatt, who, pale and trembling, stood before the Adelentado. The order of arrest has taken him completely by surprise, and of all things he dreaded the wrath of Pedro Menendez. His eyes fell before the stern countenance of the Spaniard.

"Look at me," the Adelentado said harshly, and Prevatt tried to meet his gaze. "Tell Captain Roget that you lied when you said I had slain his countrymen."

Prevatt could feel the halter about his neck, he would have said anything.

"I lied," he exclaimed quickly, and hoping to gain favor with Menendez continued to Roget, "Yes, I lied. It wasn't true. I wanted to make you angry, he didn't kill them."

"There," said Menendez to Roget, "I hope you are convinced now," and turning to Prevatt, "You are sentenced to one week of hard labor on the fort and if you meddle in my affairs again you go to the halter," and to the guards, "take him to Captain Bartolome and tell him to put him to work with the slaves."

Roget had full revenge upon the despicable traitor as he saw him slink from the room between the two guards. The Adelentado could have done nothing to so commend himself

to the Frenchman. He had doubted Prevatt in the beginning, he had thought the story preposterous, now he knew it was false.

Menendez watched Roget closely, he believed he was convinced.

"We will take one hundred and fifty soldiers," the Adelen-tado said. "That is not a large force considering there must be at least four hundred Frenchmen in their company and we must consider that their designs may be hostile."

Roget said nothing, he did not like this show of force, yet it was hard to believe the Spaniard would be so frank with him if he did not speak the truth. Otherwise he would not take him in to his confidence so freely? And what could Roget do anyway? Was he not helping his countrymen by assenting to the plan? Would he not be endangering them if he refused? These were the questions he was asking himself and the Spaniard noted his wavering. He would take no chances with this heretic.

"I will depend upon you to act fairly with me as you always have," Menendez said sharply. "I will require that you tell them of my just treatment of you and that I can keep my pledge when once given. Will you promise?"

"I promise," Roget replied.

"The expedition will start in two hours from the pier, you will be on hand ready to go."

Roget hurried to tell Adele that Alphonse was alive and well. He now regretted that he had sent the letter to him, for it would create a suspicion of Menendez which he would have to overcome. Perhaps Ribault and the entire company may have gone with Olata to the Indian village, though he did not see how the poor savage could feed so many. But perhaps he would see Alphonse before Olata reached him. He would not mention the letter to Adele.

He found the young women together beneath the bay tree.

There was no evidence of ill will between them now. Adele was reclining in the hammock and Juanita was playing the guitar and singing. They did not see him approaching, and he did not wait for the song to end.

"Adele, Alphonse is alive and well," he exclaimed in French, taking no notice of Juanita.

Adele sprang from the hammock, "Alphonse alive, thank God," she cried, "where is he?"

"With Admiral Ribault and his company, four leagues to the south. We are leaving shortly to help them across an arm of the sea."

She raised her eyes and began to repeat the Huguenot prayer of Thanksgiving, but caught herself and gave the sign of the cross instead.

Juanita had arisen from the bench and stood with guitar in hand looking at them with wondering eyes. Roget had never acted this way before, he had not even spoken to her. What was he saying in French to Adele that excited her so?

Roget happened to notice her expression. "Pardon me, Dona Juanita, I had news for Adele, her brother who we thought was dead is alive and well and only four leagues from here, I am going to meet him."

This seemed to placate her somewhat, though she watched them furtively and tried to catch the meaning of their words as Roget explained to Adele the plans as set forth by the Adelentado.

Again they went with him to the pier to see the expedition depart, Roget and Adele happy at the prospect of seeing Alphonse in the near future, Juanita sad that Roget would be away even for a day.

Practically the same route was followed by Menendez as on the previous journey, and when they disembarked he ordered three boats to continue to a point near the inlet and there to await his orders. One of these boats was heavily

laden with food which the Adelentado told Roget was for the Frenchmen who would no doubt be very hungry.

Father Salvandi and Menendez kept constantly with him and he spoke to no one else while en route nor after they reached the south bank of the inlet about midnight where they encamped.

In the morning at daybreak Roget beheld his beloved flag waving on the south bank and saw soldiers forming in battle array, for trumpets had sounded and the French had made immediate preparations for battle at the sight of the Spaniards.

But Menendez ordered his men to eat their breakfast in full view, while he, with Father Salvandi, Roget and Captain Patino strolled leisurely along the beach to show them that their intentions were peaceful.

It had its effect. The French blew a trumpet of parley and raised a white flag and the Spanish did likewise. In a few minutes a French soldier was swimming across the inlet.

As he landed Roget spoke to him, "Who is your leader?"

The soldier replied, "Admiral Jean Ribault, Viceroy to the King of France."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MASSACRE

Roget has been with Father Salvandi but little since the morning they were together at the door of the chapel, when he had learned that the priest had known his mother. For some reason their duties had kept them apart. Most of the way down the Matanzas River as they had proceeded in the leading bateau, the Dominican had sat beside him with his arm athwart the gunwale as if to steady himself, but to the Adelentado sitting opposite it appeared as if the arm of the priest was thrown affectionately around the younger man. The two chatted gaily, finding mutual delight in the companionship made more intimate by hallowed memories, each thinking that their secret was their own, but Pedro Menendez knew and watched them with grim humor as he thought of the irony of fate.

And throughout the journey and until they went into camp Father Salvandi had remained close beside Roget which was greatly to his pleasure and also was in accordance with the request of the Adelentado, for Menendez did not wish the heretic to approach too close to the spot where he had left Captain La Grange and his men nor did he wish him to ask questions concerning them when he or the priest was not present to answer.

Roget had expressed a desire to visit the camp of Captain La Grange and his men that he might speak with them, but the Adelentado assured him that it was impossible on account of the time, which seemed plausible as they had arrived at the

inlet at midnight and at dawn their attention was turned to Admiral Ribault and his company.

Early in the morning Roget had noticed that about a quarter of a mile to the north the sky was black with swarms of vultures soaring over the sand dunes and called Menendez's attention to them.

"There is carrion there," Roget said.

"Yes," replied the Spaniard, but he did not add, "and soon there will be more," which was his thought.

Roget stood upon the hard beach with the tide far out, so far that it was but a short distance between the two shores, and talked to the follower of Jean Ribault who sat upon the sand, panting from his recent exertions. The battle with the strong current in the inlet, for the tide was not yet slack, was almost too much for the poorly nourished Frenchman.

The sun, a great red ball of fire, was just coming up out of the sea, out of the blue deep to begin its journey across the blue of heaven. All nature seemed to hold its breath, the night wind had died and the morning breeze was not yet born. Only the lazy lapping of the waves on the beach, or the blowing of a porpoise in the channel and the fluttering of the school of fish rushing madly to escape its rapacious maw, broke the silence. Peace and quiet reigned in the two camps, over one the flowers on the field of blue, over the other the bright colored banner of Iberia, as the interpreter began the parley for the deliverance of the Frenchmen into the hands of the Spaniards.

"My commander desires to know who you are," the soldier said to Roget who repeated the words to Menendez standing beside him.

"Tell your commander that I am Pedro Menendez, Captain General of Florida for the King of Spain and if he desires to speak with me that I am here and will listen to him."

"Will you come or send some gentlemen to speak to our Admiral, for he has no boat with which to cross?"

"Go with God's blessing," Menendez replied, "take the small boat and if your General wishes to come I will give him my word that he with six or eight of his council can come and return safely and then he may know and follow the advice that suits him best. Lest he may doubt, tell him that one of his own officers from his fort is here as interpreter. Captain Roget can assure him that these things will be done as I have said."

So the soldier took the small boat and rowed it across and as soon as he had departed, Menendez, Father Salvandi, Roget and Captain Patino sat down to breakfast. They could see the French soldier land on the opposite shore, where he was met by an eager crowd who escorted him to the place on the high ground over which floated the Fleur-de-Lis.

It was an hour before they saw the boat returning. In it were three persons, an officer and two soldiers who were rowing. The French had not accepted the invitation for their Admiral to come with the members of his council.

As the boat approached, Roget recognized La Caille, Ribault's sergeant major, and met him at the water's edge embracing him affectionately. The French evidently feared a trap, for as he threw his arm about Roget, La Caille whispered, "What means your letter to Darboux since you are here?"

So Olata had arrived, thought Roget. He had hoped that he would not find Alphonse in time. "Speak not of the letter, I will explain," was all that he could whisper in return for the Adelentado was standing near.

The reply mystified La Caille more than ever, Darboux had received the letter the night before and had immediately taken it before the council of officers. Alphonse's confidence in Roget had immediately decided him. He was in favor of following the Indian to the place of safety as suggested by his friend. Others, however, had bitterly opposed the plan, among the number being Ribault himself with many of the volunteers

from the Huguenot noblesse whose spirits had been broken by the terrible experiences of the past few weeks. The lack of food, the gnawing pangs of hunger and other hardships encountered in the wilds made the luxury loving Frenchmen, who had come to the New World for riches and adventure, long to return to France. Their countries were at peace, they were rich and the Spanish were covetous, they would pay them for ships with which to return. On one hand were the prospects of the comforts of home, on the other lay the wilderness and savages, a diet of roots and shellfish against which their stomachs had already revolted.

The debate had lasted long into the night and then came the division, Ribault gave Darboux his discharge for himself and those who desired to take their chances with him. The others would remain with Ribault and place their faith in the Spaniards. If Menendez had spared Roget, why would he not spare them? In the morning Darboux had prepared to depart with Olata.

The return of the soldier with the news that Roget was on the opposite shore with the Spanish General had no effect on Alphonse Darboux. He believed that he was there under compulsion. The letter he knew to be genuine, he recognized the handwriting of his friend, it was written deliberately, it spoke for itself and Olata could be trusted. He would accept it before he would the words of Roget himself spoken under duress as a prisoner with the sword of death hanging over him. So Darboux with the two hundred who had decided to cast their lot with him prepared for their departure with the Indian.

But the report of the soldier that Roget was with Menendez mystified Ribault and made him more skeptical than he had been before. If Roget was held there against his will, there might be a reason to distrust the Spaniard. It was urged by his captains that an officer should be first sent to reconnoiter and La Caille had volunteered for the service. Now, the ser-

geant major wondered what Roget meant by saying that he would explain later, yet he could not ask for he saw from the manner of his countryman that silence was imperative.

"Welcome brother," Menendez himself said in French after Roget and La Caille had embraced. The visitor was invited to breakfast and the half famished man regaled himself with a wholesome meal, the first in many days. He watched Roget carefully and could detect no semblance of pretense in his manner, no effort to secretly signal thoughts other than those which his words conveyed and they bore only trust and confidence in the Spaniards.

But Menendez refused to treat with La Caille. "Tell your commander," he said, "that he may come to me with safety. I will help him, but Pedro Menendez is Adelentado and will only treat with the Viceroy himself."

Roget interpreted his words.

"I will go," replied La Caille, "and I am sure that Admiral Ribault will come."

But before he had departed Menendez called Roget aside, "You can assure him of safe conduct. I have kept faith with you. If you would serve your countrymen you can tell them of my fair treatment. But they must accept my terms and leave the country or it is war between us."

Roget therefore spoke to La Caille again. "Tell Admiral Ribault for me, that he can come and treat with the Adelentado without fear. Pedro Menendez has kept his word with me and assures me that he will do the same with you. He promises safe conduct from this country for all who desire it, but if you remain here it is war between you," and as he pushed the boat from the shore he whispered, "tell Alphonse to disregard my letter."

The world seemed much brighter to La Caille as the boat sped toward the other shore, impelled by the strokes of the two soldiers who had also been well fed. He bore the good news of

his treatment and to Ribault and the soldiers did not fail to tell their hungry comrades of the plenty that was so near to them. La Caille could not explain Roget's letter but he had the assurance from him that it should be disregarded. Alphonse Darboux and his followers, however, had already departed. It was unfortunate that such a mistake should have occurred.

In a short time the boat returned with Ribault, La Caille and seven other officers. Before these was spread a bounteous meal and Roget and La Caille stood with Father Salvandi and Menendez watching them enjoy the repast, Roget being greatly pleased at the hospitality shown his countrymen, taking occasion to thank the Adelentado for his beneficence.

He would have liked to have spoken further with La Caille regarding Darboux, he had hoped that Alphonse would return with him, but there was no opportunity to speak alone for either Father Salvandi or Menendez was ever at his elbow.

When Admiral Ribault and his companions had finished their meal the conference was entered into with a great show of friendship upon the part of Menendez and his officers which cheered the Frenchmen. Roget acted as interpreter, though Father Salvandi spoke French fluently and followed every word with care, but remained silent throughout, and Menendez himself could understand almost all that was said.

Roget repeated the terms laid down by the Adelentado. The Frenchmen were to deliver up their arms whereupon they would be transported across the inlet and safe conduct would be given them from the country. If they did not desire to do this they could return to the other shore and prepare to fight.

Roget had no mental reservations. He had considered the plight of his countrymen and viewed the matter from every standpoint as he thought. He had watched Menendez carefully for some sign of treachery but had found none. The Adelentado's only motive appeared to be to get the Frenchmen out of the country, which the Spanish claimed by right of discovery.

The Huguenot colony was a failure, their only fort had been captured and as for himself, he would gladly turn his back on the land forever and return to France. He believed that the others wished to do likewise.

He told his countrymen of the capture of Fort Caroline by the Spanish, of the escape of Laudonniere and the others, and even gave an account of the hanging of the helpless prisoners, not failing to severely criticize Menendez for his cruelty, but he added that he and Adele Darboux had been spared and kindly treated. He told them that the Adelentado had faithfully kept his solemn oath to them, when sworn upon the crucifix. He stated that according to the word of Menendez, La Grange and his company were encamped a short distance to the north, but that he himself had not seen them, though he had talked with eight Breton soldiers of the company, who had recanted and had been allowed to come to St. Augustine, all receiving fair treatment. "As the Adelentado has kept his solemn oath to me, sworn upon the crucifix," he concluded, "so I believe he will likewise keep his pledge so made with you."

Ribault thanked Menendez for his hospitality but said that he and his companions were saddened by the news of the fall of Caroline and the death of their countrymen. "But," he added, "it is but the fortune of war and we must abide by that which fortune brings. We are now in sore distress and must seek your help in assisting us to return to our country. We promise that we will not bear arms against you or your followers and will pay you well for the ships which will bear us home."

To this Menendez replied, "It would grieve me deeply to lose such a good ransom and booty, for I have dire need of that help to aid me in the conquest and the colonizing of this country which it is my duty in the name of my King to spread the Holy Gospel. But these things can be arranged later. If you will deliver up your arms to me now, which is necessary for

where there are so many of you I cannot risk the danger of your men desiring to fight, however much I may trust you gentlemen. When you have done these things you will be allowed to join Captain La Grange and his company and depart from here."

"Do you solemnly swear this upon the Crucifix," Ribault asked solemnly.

"I do swear it," and Menendez kissed the cross.

"Then we will return and call a council of our men. Many of them have already departed for they have decided that they will not come with us, but later we may get word to them and tell them of your magnanimous offer."

Roget wondered if Ribault was referring to Darboux, but he feared to ask lest it might bring to Menendez's attention the fact that he had written the letter, in fact there was even now danger of Menendez questioning Ribault as to the departure of these men which might reveal its existence.

But the Adelentado merely said with apparent nonchalance, "It is well, those who do not desire to partake of my hospitality may go their way. It matters not to me." The crafty Spaniard thought that his independence would make the unsuspecting Frenchmen more desirous of coming, which was exactly the effect it did have upon those present. They thought of the stubborn Darboux and the miseries which he would be compelled to suffer in comparison with the splendid treatment which they should receive at the hands of the noble Adelentado. Roget regretted that he had written the letter which had sent his friend into the wilderness.

With Menendez the news that some had escaped was a source of annoyance, he wished to put an end to this matter at once, to wipe out the last trace of heresy in his domain and to be forever rid of these French pests. He would attend to these fugitives later, however, and their destruction also would be only a matter of time.

Ribault and the others embarked in the boat and soon returned delivering to the Adelentado two Royal Standards, one of the King of France and the other of the Admiral, two field banners, a gilt sword and dagger, a gilt helmet, a buckler, a pistol, a seal which Coligny had given him to stamp the edicts he should issue and the titles he should give. These Ribault handed to Menendez himself and in addition there were the arms of the men.

"One hundred and fifty of the three hundred and fifty desire to partake of the hospitality of the Adelentado," he said. "The others have departed. If you will send your boats over those who are there will come at once."

It was spoken as if the invitation was to a banquet and that those who accepted would be fortunate, and Menendez furthered the idea by exclaiming to Captain Diego Florez de Valdez, "Go, Captain Valdes and bring the guests. Take twenty soldiers in each boat that there may be a worthy escort, and do not bring but ten at a trip lest the guests should be overcrowded."

There was such good spirit manifested that Roget even had the temerity to ask La Caille, "Is Chevalier Darboux coming?"

"No," he replied, "it seems that Alphonse prefers the savages to our society."

Father Salvandi caught the name, "Darboux?" he questioned La Caille in French, "Is he a relative of Mademoiselle Adele Darboux, may I ask?"

La Caille looked at the priest in surprise when he heard his pure Parisian. "Yes, he is her brother. Do you know Mademoiselle?"

"Yes, I know her well. And her brother has gone to the Indians?" the Dominican continued eagerly.

"Yes, we tried to persuade him to come with us but he preferred to take his chances with them."

Roget watched Father Salvandi with concern. If the astute

priest should continue his questioning he would surely learn of his letter, but to his surprise the Dominican said no more. Only a cynical smile played about his lips and he raised his eyes and made the sign of the Cross.

But more serious business was going on. Menendez had disappeared and Roget heard Captain Patino giving commands to Admiral Ribault and the others. La Caille was rudely ordered to get into line. Patino's manner was harsh and peremptory, so different from the courteous ways of the Adelentado. Roget would speak to Menendez, he surely would not allow such treatment to these gentlemen of France who had accepted his invitation.

In indignation he started to look for the Adelentado and found him beyond the sand dune, about two hundred feet away, in a little valley between it and the next one. Entirely hidden from the beach, in the shade of a small tree several stools had been placed as for a court or reception. Menendez sat on one of these and around him was a guard of soldiers.

The Dominican had followed Roget, moving through the sand behind him, noiselessly like a black shadow.

"Pardon me, Adelentado," said Roget, "but I am sure you would not approve of Captain Patino's manner to your guests," he used the term because Menendez had just used it himself.

"Captain Patino, I am sure, intends no discourtesy to my guests," Menendez replied blandly, "it is but his way."

They were interrupted by the approach of Ribault and his eight companions, marching over the dune. A soldier walked beside each Frenchman, and as they passed over the little hill a cordon of troops assembled around the tiny amphitheater as if by some prearranged plan.

On the faces of the visitors as they suddenly beheld the armed array were expressions of surprise, but Ribault, his long beard flowing in the breeze, which now blew steadily from the sea, looked about calm and undismayed. They were or-

dered to line up before the Adelentado, who addressed them as the astonished Roget looked on.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you will be compelled to march four leagues to my camp. As there are many of you it will be necessary to bind you lest in your numbers you might overpower us." As he spoke a soldier proceeded to tie the arms of each Frenchman.

Roget was astonished at this treatment. It was not at all contemplated under the terms and conditions of the agreement which Menendez had made with them.

"Adelentado, I beseech you," he exclaimed, "this is not necessary . . ." But the Spaniard interrupted him.

"Silence," he stormed. "I am commander here. There was nothing in the agreement that they should not be bound. It is the same treatment which La Grange received."

Roget stood back angered and abashed. It was the first time that the Adelentado had spoken harshly to him since they were at Fort Caroline. Father Salvandi stood beside him and laid his hand gently on his arm as if in compassion.

"Are you Catholics or Lutherans?" Menendez asked when they all had been securely bound.

"We are all of the New Religion," Ribault replied, and the others bowed their heads in assent.

"Do you wish to renounce your heresies and embrace the Holy Catholic faith of Jesus Christ our Lord as preached in the Roman Church?"

"We are all steadfast in our faith and we will not change," replied Ribault, "but we would ask that you keep your faith with us. We have accepted your solemn oath sworn upon the crucifix and placed ourselves at your mercy. What has befallen us may befall you some day. The Kings of France and Spain are friends, our countries are at peace, as for ships and ransom, we have told you we will pay you well. We offer you two hundred thousand ducats if you but spare us, and keep

your sacred pledge."

Menendez arose from his seat and advanced from the shade of the tree. "I shall keep my sacred pledge sworn upon the crucifix," he said sternly. "I swore that you would be allowed to join La Grange and his men and would be given a safe conduct from the country. I will do both. Look," and he pointed to the north where the ill omened birds flocked, some eagerly scooping down to the feast, others satiated with their gluttony lazily soaring away or darkening the dead branches of trees. "See those vultures. There is the camp of La Grange and his company of heretics. You shall join them and you shall have safe conduct out of this country, for your souls will soon be burning in the fires of Hell. Those birds hunger for the carcasses of heretics and, by the mass, there shall be another banquet spread for them."

Roget was standing in front of and a little to the side of Menendez, Father Salvandi was beside him. He had listened to the words of the Spaniard too astounded to utter a sound. As a realization of their full import came to him he was for the moment numb with horror, then such frenzied rage seized him at the enormity of the crime about to be committed that, blind to all consequences, he rushed toward the Adelentado drawing his rapier as he ran. Before Father Salvandi could put forth a restraining hand, he was upon the Spaniard. He knew the vulnerable spot between the links of his armor, he would drive the sword through the heart of the demon and then it would be sweet to die with knowledge of his accomplishment.

"Thou shalt die first, Pedro Menendez," he cried as his sword passed through the fluting of his breast plate.

The force of the blow sent Menendez reeling backward, falling beneath the tree where he had sat, but the flexible steel coat which he wore beneath his shirt had caught the point of the rapier and the blade snapped in twain.

In an instant the guards were upon Roget. The stub of his sword was useless for defense.

They held him as others assisted the Adelentado to rise. He was unhurt.

"So the heretic breaks his pledge," he said scornfully. "Bind him also," he ordered the guards, and they tied Roget's arms securely behind him. "Stand him there," he pointed to a place beside Father Salvandi, glancing at the priest who stood silently watching the scene, his pale face in sharp contrast to the black mantle of the order of Saint Dominic.

"Now we will proceed," Menendez continued, "have you anything further to say?" he asked Ribault.

The old Admiral raised his head and said, "From out of the ground were we taken, for dust we are and unto dust we must return. A few years more or less counts little, Pedro Menendez do your will," and he began to sing "Domine Memento mei."

But before he had finished Menendez gave the order to march and over the dune they went with their butchers each of whom was armed with a long knife.

As the last one disappeared, the Adelentado turned to Roget. "You should die with them, but I shall keep you to the end. You shall see all the others go and then you shall follow after."

He turned to the guard. "Tie him to a tree near the line which I have made in the sand. Place him where he can see how I serve my guests who are heretics and enemies of God. And as each one dies it will be a reminder to him of the penalty he shall pay for breaking his pledge to Pedro Menendez."

As they led Roget over the dune, following Ribault and the rest, the next ten Frenchmen, well fed and delighted at their reception, came up from the beach.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE DISCLOSURE

Pedro Menendez sat upon his stool where throughout the day he had propounded the ominous question to each group of ten as they were brought before him. Captain Andres Lopez Patino sat on another stool beside him. It was no longer necessary for them to remain beneath the tree for shade, for the sun was sinking behind the palms on the bank of the Matanzas River and the little valley between the dunes was in the shadow. All day it had been very warm in the little amphitheatre where the sentence of death was passed, but now it was growing chill. The long stalks of grass on the dunes were almost bent to the ground by the force of the strong breeze from the sea.

The tide, which was low in the morning when Admiral Jean Ribault, Viceroy to the King of France, first came, had turned and carried its flood through the inlet covering the marsh lands and flats and had again it had ebbed, returning its water to the ocean that gave it. Once more was the tide low and slack, but instead of the quite lapping of the waves as in the morning when all nature seemed hushed, now the breakers driven by the stiff southeast wind, broke upon the hard beach with a sullen roar.

As the tide had done its day's work, so had Pedro Menendez done his and the Adelentado was well pleased with his accomplishments.

"How many does that make?" he asked Patino, the official scorer.

"One hundred and thirty-four to the knife, four recanted, twelve of the fifiers, drummers and trumpeters, whom you saved because we need them."

Being a heretic mattered little to Menendez if there was service to be had.

"That makes one hundred and fifty, all that Ribault claimed," remarked the Adelentado.

"And if we had the two hundred who escaped, we would be entirely rid of the pests," Patino suggested.

"We will get them in time," Menendez said grimly.

Captain Diego Florez de Valdes came up from the beach. He looked fatigued, fighting the tide both flow and ebb across Matanzas inlet fifteen trips was wearing on his men and as he was responsible to the Adelentado in making the proper schedule he, too, felt the strain.

"Have all our guests arrived Captain Valdes?" Menendez asked, as the hard lines about his mouth relaxed into a smile.

"Yes," replied Valdes wearily, "and a greedier company I never saw, they even fought for a place in the boat."

"We have given them a warm reception, they are now burning in hell." Menendez smiled broadly. Valdes had never seen him in such fine humor.

The ten butchers came over the dune from the north, matadors they had been termed in jest—their clothes were saturated with blood and their long knives were dripping. The leader, or chief matador, reported to Menendez. He wished to know if there were others. They were ready for more. His men had become quite adept, so adept that one stroke of the knife had been sufficient for each heretic in the last three batches.

"That is all," Menendez replied, "now we will see what booty we have obtained. Bendano has not yet reported."

"His men have searched well," the chief butcher remarked, "there is a goodly pile, much more than obtained from the

other company."

"I hope they had the two hundred thousand ducats with them, but we will see." The Adelentado arose and moved toward the valley of death to the north, followed by the others.

Bendano had done his work thoroughly. A large pile of booty lay on the east side, in the lee of the dune so that the wind would not blow the lighter garments away, for even the clothing that was considered of value was saved. Bendano carried the jewels and money in a bag which he held in his hand. Only a large discolored spot marked the place where the line was drawn as if the grains of sand had endeavored to soak up evidence of the crime, but which the tangled mass nearby was a mute but gruesome proof.

Menendez's sharp eye caught sight of a moving limb in the tangled mass.

"What is this?" he exclaimed to the chief matador, "You do your work poorly. The seed of heresy is yet alive."

But it was a mistake that the matador had little trouble in remedying.

"Did you save the head of the chief heretic?" Menendez asked.

"Yes, Adelentado," replied the matador, "it is there in the grass."

"And the beard? You have been careful that it should not be stained."

"Yes, Adelentado, it is spotless."

"It is well, I wish to send a portion to his Majesty the King." As Menendez was about to turn away his brain conceived a new thought. He spoke again to the chief butcher. "Clip the beard and hew the head into four parts. Display one part on the point of a lance at each of the corners of St. Augustine."

Having given the order he cast his eyes over the scene until

it rested on a tree on the west side of the little valley where the sand rose, into a dune which ran parallel to the sea.

They had tied Roget securely enough. He looked more like a coil of rope bundled about the tree than a human being. Only his pale face showed, with a pair of eyes that burned like coals of fire beneath the shock of disheveled hair, glued were they upon Menendez, the bloodshot balls rolling as they followed his every move. Most of the day these eyes had been closed to shut out the vision which seemed to scorch his brain as the little valley became a gehenna.

The Adelentado stood before him. "The heretic has had a splendid vantage point to view the performance," he said scornfully.

The answer came like a snarl from a tortured animal. "Hell-born fiend, wreak your vengeance upon me, as you have upon my defenseless countrymen. You may kill my body but you cannot kill my soul."

"Ha, sayst thou so?" Menendez sneered, "perhaps I might. Who knows? Perhaps I might save your soul before I destroy your body." The shoulders of the Spaniard raised in a contemptuous shrug—"But is the soul of a heretic such as you worth saving?"

"Yes," came a voice from behind him, and the Adelentado turned to look into the black eyes of Father Salvandi.

Menendez was not only surprised but very much disconcerted. Would the priest go so far as to oppose his sentence of death imposed upon the heretic? Such a procedure was unusual, but he knew the Dominican did not know the meaning of fear. The Adelentado was powerful, but the power of the Church was greater and the influence of the priest over the soldiers was a factor to be carefully considered. Menendez was fully aware that in the band of adventurers that followed his banner there were many who would welcome an opportunity to mutiny if the occasion arose wherein their success

might be assured. It was his iron hand that curbed them and he knew it. He would dread a break with the popular priest. But nothing in Menendez's countenance showed his discomfort or the quick working of his mind.

"Then what would you suggest, reverend father?" he asked courteously.

"I would that I might have the opportunity to save his soul," the priest replied.

Menendez did not believe that Roget would recant. Of that he thought he had sufficient evidence. But if the priest requested the privilege of trying he could be criticised for standing in his way. It would only mean an execution deferred, and a few days did not matter.

"If the reverend father desires to convert the heretic it will give me pleasure to grant a reprieve, but how long a time do you ask?"

Father Salvandi thought for a moment. "Allow me three days," he said.

"And then?" questioned Menendez.

"And then," the priest spoke slowly, "it will be as the Adelantado commands."

This was even better than Menendez had at first expected.

"He will be a prisoner in the meantime."

"Yes, he will be a prisoner."

"It is well." Menendez turned to Patino. "Captain, take charge of the heretic and see that he does not escape. Place him in the guard house and let no one see him save Father Salvandi." And Menendez walked away conversing with the priest, stopping at the top of the dune to remark upon the beauty of the scene before them, the mingled shades of color that lay upon the water, the deep blue softening into azure as the sea met the sky.

Again it was dawn before the expedition returned to St. Augustine, and after mass and the singing of the *Te Deum*

Ladamus Menendez sought to rest. But before the noon hour he was at the fort inspecting the work that had been done during his absence.

"What are the people saying?" he asked Bartolome Menendez, the Alcaide.

"I understand that some censure and others applaud, but it is the general opinion that even if they had been Catholics you would have done right, for with our limited supplies they would have soon starved."

"It is well—advise me promptly if there are mutterings from any cause."

The Adelentado proceeded to write a chronicle of events for his Majesty, King Phillip. "I had their hands tied behind their backs," he wrote, "and themselves passed under the knife. It appeared to me that by thus chastising them God our Lord and your Majesty were served; whereby in future they will leave us more free from their evil sect, to plant the gospel in these parts. And I consider it great good fortune that Jean Ribault should be dead, for the King of France could effect more with him and five hundred ducats than with other men and five thousand, and he would do more in one year than another in ten, for he was the most experienced sailor and naval commander ever known, and of great skill in this passage of the Indies and the coast of Florida. He was, besides, greatly liked in England, in which kingdom his reputation is such that he was appointed Captain-General of all the British fleet against the French Catholics in the war between England and France some years ago."

A few hours later as he was just awakening from his siesta, Juanita Acosta came to him where he lay in the hammock in the shade of the bay tree.

"Uncle," she said, "I learn that Roget is in prison."

"Yes," he replied, yawning lazily.

"What will you do with him?" she asked.

"He is to be hanged."

She turned very pale. "Uncle you cannot hang Louis Roget," she said in a firm voice.

"Cannot?" he repeated, "Why?"

"I mean, uncle, you must not."

"Why must I not?" It was becoming amusing.

"Because I ask you not to."

"Why, my child?" he said more seriously. "It is but his just desserts. He attacked me. He would have killed me, but for my inner coat of mail."

She fell upon her knees beside the hammock and gently stroked the forehead of the Adelentado. "Please, Uncle," she pleaded, "do not let him be killed."

"What is this," he demanded impatiently, "what matters it to you that the heretic should die?"

"It matters much, uncle, I cannot bear it," she was sobbing on his shoulder.

Menendez pondered for a moment. This was a new angle to view the situation. He had expected that Father Salvandi might raise a protest against his sentence, he had heard that it was not popular with the Asturian soldiers by whom Roget was well liked, he had even feared that he might have to reckon with Satouriana, the Tumucuan Chief, but he never suspected mutiny in his own household.

"Juanita," he said in very serious tone as he sat upon the hammock, "this is not in keeping with the dignity of Dona Juanita, the niece of the Adelentado. My dear, you cannot afford to take so much interest in the heretic. He is nothing to you."

"He is all to me," she murmured.

He took her tenderly, much as he would have taken a child, and sat her beside him in the hammock. Her words sounded ominous to him, he had never before heard his Juanita speak so.

"What do you mean by those words, my child?"

"I mean that I love Louis Roget," she looked him straight in the eye and though tears coursed down her cheeks her voice was steady.

"Love this heretic!" he exclaimed in horror, "that cannot be. How could you love one not of your own sect?"

"I do not know, uncle, I only know I love him."

Menendez's brow contracted, there was no control of facial expression here. It was beyond his ken. Death for those who stood in his way had always been his method; here death was not the cure for the evil. Here was a case he could not understand. He inwardly cursed the heretic for taking advantage of his hospitality as he believed, and winning the love of the one person he loved most of all. Probably the heretic was even now gloating over the fact that he held a club over the head of the Adelentado.

In his anger he sought for some one upon whom to vent his spleen. "Who told you the heretic was in prison?" he asked surily.

"Father Salvandi," she replied without hesitation.

"Ah," was all he said, but he was thinking hard. So the Dominican was a party to the conspiracy. Perhaps the heretic was not such a heretic after all, there may have been an understanding between him and the Dominican. Three days the priest had asked to convert him during which he knew that Juanita would save his life through supplication. He supposed it was the plan to bring him into the Church and then to seek the hand of his Juanita. That he had already gained her love, he did not doubt.

But Pedro Menendez never admitted defeat, he would checkmate them, even if he was compelled to have Roget secretly killed while in prison.

His thoughts were interrupted by Juanita.

"You will not harm Roget, will you uncle?" she pleaded.

"The sentence has already been passed," he parried.

"But you can pardon him, you have the power."

He saw the anguish in her eyes, she loved him, no doubt. But it could not be, he had other plans for her.

"No, I cannot pardon him. What is done, is done."

She arose and without a word tottered toward the house. He watched her swaying form as she walked. He had not expected this.

Menendez was very much annoyed, his was the game of war, not the game of hearts. He wished to punish Roget with death, but he did not want to hurt Juanita. The union of the two was preposterous and not to be thought of, but if he became a Catholic it was not impossible. How could he prevent his recanting should his life be spared? This was the question he asked himself as he went to the house.

He met Adele at the door. She was wild-eyed with terror. "Juanita, she is ill," she cried.

"Where?" the Adelentado asked, but there was no need to question for he could hear her heart rending sobs and the words of Catalina trying to comfort his niece.

Adele had not heard of Roget's incarceration. Juanita in her jealous love had even kept the story of his misfortune a secret. It was too sacred to be revealed to her rival. Adele had wondered why her beloved had not come again in the morning for Menendez had returned and she knew that Roget had gone away with him. Yet she would not ask concerning him, she never asked now, she only waited.

Menendez went to Juanita who had thrown herself across the couch in her room. Catalina was bending over her vainly endeavoring to quiet the girl whose body shook with convulsive sobs. The duenna was greatly excited, she did not know the cause of the hysteria and appealed to Menendez to get the doctor at once. But the Adelentado knew it was not a case for the physician.

He leaned over Juanita and put his arm gently about her, but she seemed to feel his presence and before he could speak she shrank from him, drawing herself into the corner away from him and crying hysterically, "You shall not kill Roget, you shall not."

Adele, standing beside the door, caught the words; she knew enough Spanish for that. "Kill Roget," she murmured. "Who would kill Roget?"

Menendez was speaking softly to Juanita and Adele could not catch his meaning, but that mattered not to her, she had heard enough. Louis was in danger.

The Adelentado, endeavoring to quiet one woman who was hysterically pleading with him in Spanish, heard a voice in French at his side say, "No, you shall not kill Roget, you gave me your sacred promise you would not kill him if I would recant."

Menendez looked at Adele in surprise. He had entirely forgotten his pledge made to her at Fort Caroline.

Now the two women were beside him, one wild-eyed and hysterical pleading in Spanish, the other calmly but firmly supplicating in French.

The Adelentado was brave in battle but here was a situation in which bravery counted for naught. Yet he tenaciously held his position and sought for a loop hole wherewith to extricate himself. He did not wish to allow Roget to go unpunished, but unless he promised not to kill the heretic he knew there would be no peace at home. He thought of the Inquisition. If he assisted Father Mendoza, whether Roget recanted or not, the charges of sorcery could still hold against him, and if the heretic was sentenced to death by the Holy Office, he, Menendez, would be absolved from all promises.

His decision was quickly made.

"Yes," he said, "I promise that I will not have him killed."

Juanita threw her arms about his neck and covered his face

with kisses.

Menendez walked along the trail that led to the fort, deep in thought. His bodyguard followed closely behind him, but he was oblivious of their presence. He was very much chagrined. This Roget must lead a charmed life, first saved by the arrow of a savage, now by the heart of a woman, and he would surely win Juanita unless he, Menendez, acted promptly.

The fact that Roget loved Adele instead of Juanita never occurred to the Spaniard. How any one could fail to succumb to the charms of his attractive niece, he could not imagine and so this point was not even debated in his own mind. All his faculties were centered upon the problem of destroying the heretic yet preserving for himself the love of his niece whom he regarded as a daughter.

This he could only accomplish through the Holy Office and he needed the influence of Father Mendoza, the Jesuit, for he knew that the sympathies of Father Salvandi, the Dominican, were on the side of Roget. Yet he knew further that if he could succeed in involving Roget in the throes of the Inquisition, Father Salvandi's sympathies would count for naught in the heretics favor, for under Tarquemada's Code of Terror the Dominican's duty was clearly defined.

He must see Father Mendoza at once and confer with him. Only a few days before, he had played the Dominican against the Jesuit to save the life of Roget, now he would play the Jesuit against the Dominican to destroy him. He, therefore, sent a message to Father Mendoza stating that at the convenience of the priest he would be pleased to confer with him at his headquarters on a matter of great importance.

The Jesuit did not delay in coming.

"I ask the reverend father's pardon," Menendez began, "I would have gone to you, Father Mendoza, but I know that there is less likelihood of our being disturbed here and I would confer with you in private."

"I am pleased to come to you, my son," the priest replied, "and your reasoning is correct, for my children come to me at all times, my house is always open to them."

"I would speak to you of Roget, the heretic."

"Yes, my son."

"You remember, father, I asked that you refrain from proceeding with your charges against him, until I had made my treaty with the Indians."

"Yes, I remember."

"Now, that is done. I thought I should advise you that you might follow the dictates of duty."

Father Mendoza was much pleased. He had thought the Adelentado had leaned to the side of the Dominican at the previous meeting, and since he had learned that his protege had been sentenced to hard labor for merely speaking harshly to the heretic, which was the report which Prevatt had given him, he had decided that Menendez was decidedly antagonistic to him and his order. He had thought seriously of making a report to the General of the Society of Jesus that in his opinion the Adelentado of Florida was unfriendly to the Jesuits. Now he found that he was in error.

"I am always ready to do my duty," the priest said eagerly.

"I think it only proper that there are certain facts that you should know."

The priest waited, slowly twirling his thumbs.

"The heretic had been guilty of attempting to thwart the work of his Majesty's servants in ridding the country of these French heretics. He even attacked the person of the Adelentado."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the priest.

"I thought first of sending him to the halter, but after due consideration it occurred to me that by so doing I might be usurping the authority of the Holy Office since he was first guilty of heresy and sorcery, and the Inquisition would have

prior jurisdiction."

"I quite agree with you, my son."

"Unfortunately—and I say unfortunately, for it is always unfortunate when duty and sympathy clash." The Adelentado wish to impress his sense of utter fairness, "unfortunately, the good Father Salvandi was at one time in love with the mother of the heretic."

The Jesuit ceased to twirl his thumbs and sat bolt upright in his chair.

"Of course, that was before he entered the priesthood," Menendez hastened to add.

"Oh!" the Priest exclaimed.

"It is the effect of sympathy to which I refer. He most naturally feels kindly toward the heretic."

"Quite so, I have noticed that already."

"You cannot blame the good priest, however," Menendez continued benignly, "for it fell to his lot to condemn the same woman to the stake." He paused that the priest might grasp the full import of the remark.

Father Mendoza breathed heavily, "A strange fatality," he murmured.

"Yes, a strange fatality, and even more strange that it should fall to his lot to repeat the sentence upon her son."

"Yet, if it is the law, it must be done," the priest asserted.

"Yes, it must be done," echoed the Adelentado.

"Does the heretic know this?" Father Mendoza inquired.

"No, and that is why I have asked you to come. I think he should know, for in that way his heart will be smitten and he will be more greatly impressed with the power of the Holy Mother Church even to the ends of the earth. "But," and the Adelentado spoke humbly, "I would consult you, for these are matters upon which you can best advise."

"I think your reasoning is good, my son."

"Then I will send for him and tell him now."

He ordered the guard to bring the heretic to his headquarters.

While they waited Father Mendoza thought it opportune to intercede for his protege.

"Captain Prevatt suffers greatly under the heavy burdens imposed upon him," he began.

"Ah, yes, Prevatt," in the multiplicity of the events transpiring Menendez had entirely forgotten the renegade. He anticipated Father Mendoza's request for from the priest's tone he supposed that it was his pardon he asked. This was easy to grant, for success had crowned his efforts in those matters concerning which Prevatt was punished, and in granting the request promptly he could thereby gain greater favor with the Jesuit. "You would have me pardon him, reverend father?"

"Yes, my son."

"You may take it to him, if you will," he wrote an order and handed it to the priest. "It was one of those cases where discipline required the punishment which is sufficient now and I gladly pardon him at your request."

Father Mendoza was expressing his thanks as the guards entered with Roget, who came with head erect and met the eye of Menendez steadily. He noted the presence of the Jesuit and wondered, for it was usually Father Salvandi who was with the Adelentado.

"Heretic," Menendez said harshly, "I have sentenced you to death . . . but I have decided to spare your life again."

Roget stood unmoved. Since his experience on the dunes of Matanzas the words of Menendez meant nothing. He did, however, think of Olata and Satouriana and wonder if they had aught to do with the Spaniard's decision.

"The Holy Office will take charge of you," Menendez continued, "and the Inquisition will decide your fate."

The prisoner involuntarily flinched, a feeling of numbness had gripped his spine.

"Father Salvandi will see that you receive justice," the Spaniard went on relentlessly, "and he knows how to deal justice, for he knew your mother well . . ."

Roget's form stiffened. "Dog of a Spaniard," he growled, "keep my mother's name from your lips." He started toward Menendez but the guards held him back.

"Not so discourteous, heretic, it will gain you nothing. Besides, there is no harm in telling you what you should know. Father Salvandi condemned your mother, Isabel Mendrano, to the stake."

"You lie!" Roget exclaimed fiercely.

"Ask him," said the Adelentado calmly.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE INQUISITION

To Roget it seemed there was no justice in the world, all the light had gone out and the Powers of Darkness were in the ascendancy. He could not have believed that such a fate could have befallen Jean Ribault and his followers. There was only one bright spot in all the gloom—he had saved Alphonse Darboux and his companions. Why had he not held to his first decision concerning Menendez? Why had he not remained of the same opinion which his first impression gave? If so, his countrymen might now be alive. He mentally scourged himself for his credulity, yet who could foresee the workings of the mind of the crafty Spaniard whose pledge was worthless. These were his thoughts as he sat in the guard house listening to the noises that came to him from the outside, the faint hum of activity as the work on the fort progressed.

The guard house stood a short distance from the new fortifications and was only a temporary prison hastily constructed for use until the dungeon excavated beneath the ramparts of the fort could be completed. It was Menendez's greatest regret that this was not ready to accommodate the heretic. The temporary prison was built of logs hewn on two sides and laid close together the cracks being covered by poles and slabs. There was only one opening besides the door, and this was high up near the roof on the west side, and provided but little ventilation and light. It was so small that the body of a man could not pass through it even if it could be reached. The roof was built of light slabs and the floor was sand gravel.

There were two stools and the bed was a pile of pine straw heaped in the corner.

Above the low hum from the outside, Roget continually heard strange noises about the gloomy room. They were low grinding sounds that seemed to come from within the walls and there was a constant scraping upon the roof. At first he thought it was someone trying to cut their way in but he found that it was not in any one spot but came from all four sides. He investigated and discerned that it was the worms cutting within the logs and that the noise on the roof was the scraping of the limbs of the large oak beneath which the guard house was built. He remembered now, this oak stood on the edge of the forest. He welcomed these sounds, even the worms within the logs were friends and companions in his loneliness.

He had just returned from the headquarters of Menendez where he had received terrible announcement of the Adelentado concerning Father Salvandi. Since the Dominican had interceded for him and virtually saved his life, the priest had further ingratiated himself with the Frenchman. On the return to St. Augustine, he had remained with Roget throughout the night marching by his side and sitting beside him in the boat, speaking words of comfort, usually in his own vernacular as if that in itself would be a comfort to the lonely man. It was undoubtedly through the influence of the priest that Patino and the guards had treated him kindly, in fact it seemed that the Adelentado himself was the only enemy Roget had in the camp except of course Prevatt, the renegade.

He believed that Menendez had told him of the part the Dominican had in his mother's death in order to make him suffer the more and to sever the tie of friendship between them, and that his life had been spared and he had been consigned to the mercies of the Inquisition in order that his torture might be the greater. He knew nothing of Juanita's intercession for him nor the charge of sorcery that hung over

his head.

The grating of the key in the lock and the scraping of the iron bars on the outside of the heavy door aroused him from his dismal thoughts. The door swung open and Father Salvandi entered.

The tall priest came toward him with outstretched hands, his eyes sparkling and a smile that brightened the usual sombre countenance of the ascetic. Roget noted it in the shaft of light before the guard closed the door.

"Ah, my son," Father Salvandi said cordially, "I was delayed. I should have been with you before but I was waiting for news of importance." Then he noted the absence of the usual friendly greeting, the lack of sympathy, he sensed an air of aloofness. He paused and looked sharply at Roget, bending forward that he might see more distinctly through the gloom. "Are you not glad to see me, my son?"

"Yes," Roget answered simply. He was bound to admit that he was glad to see the priest, yet it could never be the same if what he had heard was true.

"Your manner is constrained, my son," Father Salvandi said kindly, "something has happened, what is it?"

Roget did not reply. It was a subject difficult to approach. Could this man who seemed so kind and gentle, who had endeavored in every way to lighten his burden in his darkest hours, who had in fact just saved his life, be the one who had condemned his angel mother to her death?

Throughout his adolescence and on into manhood there had developed within him, as the years went on, a most virulent enmity against all who had a part in the great tragedy of his young life, a hatred so bitter as to become a cancer of malignancy. Death of those who had condemned her to the stake seemed the only adequate revenge. But even if it were true that Salvandi was one of these, after all what would the priest's death avail him.

"It is a matter of which I know not how to speak," he said with embarrassment. "I do not believe it can be true, and yet if it should be, Senor Salvandi, however much you may have befriended me there can be naught but enmity between us."

The priest started nervously. Could Roget know the truth? There was no one here who could possibly have known save the Adelentado himself and it had been so long and the incident so remote that he had dismissed from his mind any possibility of Menendez's remembering.

"It would grieve me deeply," he replied, "should there be enmity in your heart toward me, my son. There could never be enmity between us for such I could never bear toward thee."

Roget felt that he must go on. "But if you suddenly found that he whom you admired and trusted was one who had robbed you of the gift of God that comes to man but once in life, the love of a good pure mother, if you found that he had taken her from you, cruelly, unmercifully, would you not hate, Senor Salvandi?"

"Yes, my son, unless the spirit of Christ was in my heart to forgive."

Roget shook his head. "No, I could not forgive."

"Even if he who robbed you suffered more than you?"

"That could not be."

"My son, thou knowest not what anguish the soul can bear. Hate me if you will, but there could be no suffering greater than mine and only the light of Divine Countenance could sustain me and make me steadfast."

"Then Pedro Menendez was right, it was you who condemned my mother to the stake."

"Yes, I destroyed one I loved but it had to be."

The two men stood scarcely a pace part, each could see the outline of the other in the dim light, the priest with folded

arms and bowed head the prisoner with head erect gazing upon the other.

Roget was about to speak when the door swung open and the voice of Menendez could be heard commanding the guards.

"Two of you guard the door, leave it open so we can see. The other two come with us."

He entered with Father Mendoza groping their way in the dim light to which they were unaccustomed.

"Ah, Father Salvandi is here now," he said in surprised tone.

"Yes. I am here," the Dominican replied, "what would you have of me?"

"We came to question the heretic."

"Then you would not have me present," Father Salvandi remarked dryly.

"Oh, yes," the Jesuit hastened to interpose, "we inquired for you but you could not be found. It is proper that you be present, we can begin the cross examination of the prisoner."

"Why would you cross examine him may I ask?"

"For the Inquisition," replied Father Mendoza.

Thus does Menendez pardon, thought Father Salvandi. That had occurred which he most dreaded, the Adelentado had united with the Jesuit in his efforts to place Roget under the jurisdiction of the Holy Office and now there could be but one avenue of deliverance. He must renounce his religion and embrace the Catholic faith. The Dominican must again become the Inquisitor and then his duty would be clearly defined, he must accept the testimony as presented and under his conscience judge in accordance therewith. Unless Roget recanted there was but one decision. As he had adjudged the mother so must he adjudge the son. Surely his cup of anguish was overflowing.

But the Adelentado and the Jesuit must move in accordance with the law, it was the prerogative of the Dominican

to see that this was done.

"The examination can only be made in due form," he said, "It must be held in the Holy House in the presence of a notary and before the Inquisitors, regularly appointed."

Father Mendoza was not in the least perturbed. "As Vicar of the Diocese of St. Augustine," he said, I will now serve notice upon you as official head of the Inquisition that I desire the tribunal organized that I may present charges against Louis Roget for heresy."

"I will organize the tribunal and notify you of the time and place of the meeting."

"Then there is nothing more that we can do here," Menendez said.

"Nothing since Father Salvandi demands the regular course of procedure," the Jesuit replied.

"Then we will go."

Menendez and Father Mendoza went toward the door followed by two guards. Father Salvandi looked at Roget as if about to speak then as if changing his mind, he too turned and followed them.

The prisoner had been confined since early morning and now it was late in the afternoon. The setting sun cast a ray of light through the small opening near the roof and the shaft lay almost horizontally across the upper portion of the gloomy room brightening it like a gleam of hope. As Roget watched it fade he thought how like his own hope it was, fading into the darkness of the night.

He thought of Adele and what her fate would be after he was gone. Would Menendez continue to treat her kindly and would she continue to live in the Spanish colony becoming one of them? The thought of her marrying anyone but himself was torture enough but that the man should be one of his enemies seemed unbearable.

Or would Alphonse Darboux come with Olata to rescue his

white sister? The two hundred French under Darboux, with Satouriana and his warriors would make a formidable force which even Menendez with his strong fort and large guns might fear.

Where was Olata now, he wondered, If the Indian had started south with Darboux and his companions on the previous morning, he should have reached the village of Coacoochee by this time since he had said it was two days journey. Probably by the early morning he would be on his way back to St. Augustine bearing a message from Alphonse. But what would he do when he arrived and found his white brother was imprisoned? He might seek Adele but even so she would be powerless. He would like to get a message to her he thought, but there was no one he could trust. He might have asked Father Salvandi before, but not now. He had made a mistake in not telling Adele of the letter which he had written to Alphonse.

Father Salvandi, under the law of the Spanish Inquisition formulated by Frey Thomas de Torquemada, was compelled to organize the tribunal at once. Up to this time there had been none in St. Augustine as the settlement had been founded less than a month, and there had been no need for such an institution. The court was composed of the head of the Dominican Order as Chief Inquisitor, who was the official delegate of the Grand Inquisitor in Spain, the diocesan ordinary, the fiscal advocate and a notary to take down all that transpired.

Menendez readily provided a Casa Santa or Holy House, where the court convened. Father Salvandi, Father Mendoza and Father Gonzalo a Dominican friar, with the notary sat about a table on which was a tall crucifix between two candles and a copy of the Gospels. There was also present Alvaro Herera, the fiscal prosecutor. Thus had the Dominican organized the Inquisition as was his duty. He had used his

eloquence to induce the heretic to abjure his error, now terror must accomplish that which was impossible to persuasion. It was all for the love of Christ. He must trample out the last spark of earthly flame. Though it slay him, he must offer her son as a last sacrifice upon the altar of his faith.

Pedro Menendez was absent. This was a matter with which he had nothing to do. It was an affair of the Holy Office.

Two soldiers acted as apparitors and Roget was brought before the court. He had sworn upon the Gospels and asked his name, age and place of birth, all of which was carefully entered by the notary.

Thereupon the prosecutor read his formal accusation. "I, Alvaro Herera, Fiscal Prosecutor of the Holy Inquisition in this diocese of St. Augustine, in the province of Florida appear before your Reverend Paternities in the manner by law prescribed to denounce Louis Roget who is present,

"Not content that he is humanely permitted to abide and converse with the faithful and Catholic Christians, he fails to attend mass and is guilty of disrespect to the officers of the Holy Mother Church and that therefore he be adjudged a heretic under the law,

"That he is guilty of performing sorcery in the nature of heresy by inducing and attracting some savages to draw the short straw which is contrary to the law as set forth in the Directorium,

"That he has induced and attracted the savages with false and deceptive doctrines, telling them that the teaching of Luther is the one in which there is salvation.

"Wherefore I beg of you, Reverend sirs, that you pronounce the said Louis Roget for the said crimes to be a subverter and destroyer of the Catholic and Christian Law; and that he shall be deemed to have fallen into and incurred all the penalties and censures prescribed by canon and civil law for those who commit these crimes, and the confiscation and loss

of all his property, if there be any, which shall be applied to the Royal treasury, and that he may be abandoned to the secular arm and justice, as befits a malefactor, a heretic and an extirpator of the Catholic Faith."

Having presented the accusation Herera requested that the prisoner plead as to his guilt or innocence.

Father Salvandi requested the prisoner to stand. "Do you believe in the Holy Catholic Faith of Jesus Christ our Lord as it is preached in the Roman Church?"

"I do not," replied Roget emphatically.

"You have heard the formal accusation as read by the Fiscal Prosecutor, do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"I know not the meaning of the accusations as to sorcery or teaching the doctrine of Luther to the Indians. As to the other I am of the New Religion. I do not believe in the doctrine of the Roman Church and I will have none of it."

The Prosecutor then addressed the court, "Reverend sirs, the accused admits that he is a heretic. I therefore pray you that he be permitted to abjure his heresies and submit to canonical purgation to cleanse him of evil reputation. But upon these accusations which he denies his guilt or claims ignorance that he be dealt with as a negative and put to the torture to force him to confess the truth regarding these things."

If the court granted the prayer of the Prosecutor it would mean that Roget would go to the rack in order to make him confess his guilt as to sorcery and spreading the doctrine among the Indians and in addition unless he recanted, his abandonment to the secular arm. This would mean death by fire.

Father Salvandi realized that Herera had done his work well, there was not a technical mistake by which Roget could escape. It was the law under the Code of Terror. His own duty was clear, it mattered not if his heart bled for the

prisoner, his course was well defined. He hoped against hope that Roget might recant and save himself. Slowly he put the question.

"Will you abjure your heresies and embrace the teachings of the Holy Mother Church?"

Roget stood with folded arms and head erect. "No," he said calmly. "In my faith I have lived and in my faith I shall die."

The Inquisitors consulted for a few moments.

Father Mendoza, twirling his thumbs, smiled benignly upon Father Salvandi as the Dominican arose to pass sentence. His voice was firm.

"The accused, having assented to the accusation is adjudged a heretic under the law. Under the second and third accusations having plead ignorance he is subject to further investigation. It is therefore ordered that since he may be made to confess these things for the further enlightenment of the court that the Inquisitors proceed to employ the question."

Roget did not understand the phraseology of the Inquisition. He did not know that "to employ the question" was another term for the one "to sentence to torture."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RACK

Father Salvandi did not subscribe to the views of some of the founders of the Spanish Inquisition that God was the first Inquisitor, that the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was the first Auto-de-Fe, or Act of Faith, and was therefore a worthy precedent for the confiscation of property and the punishment of heretics. To him the Inquisition was a means to an end, it was the accomplishment of a Holy purpose, the saving of lost souls terminating their earthly careers, thereby preventing the spread of heresy.

Just as Domigon de Guzman, canonized as Saint Dominic, the founder of the Order of which he was a member, had made thousands of converts by the burning eloquence of his oratory, yet when his eloquence failed had hesitated not to resort to the burning fagot, so he too as a humble follower of the Saint had done likewise. It was the law. He had taken the vows and by it must abide. Any act of kindness toward Roget, not in conflict with the mode of procedure as laid down by the Code of Terror he would gladly do, but that which the Code prescribed he must perform.

It was unfortunate for Roget that Father Mendoza was one of the Inquisitors. Father Salvandi had been powerless in this particular, for the law required that the "diocesan ordinary" should be a member of the tribunal and as Vicar of the Diocese, Father Mendoza had the right of appointment. He decided that he himself would serve. That no mercy could be expected from the Jesuit, the Dominican knew. He could only require

him to adhere strictly to the rules and surely they were harsh enough. One of the very few matters left to the discretion of the Inquisitors was the mode of torture or the employment of the question, and Father Salvandi determined that in Roget's case he would favor the one most merciful.

But the mercifulness of the three methods available in St. Augustine at this time was after all merely relative. The escalara or water torture was of the three regarded the most cruel and was favored by Father Mendoza as being the most efficient. If used, the accused would be lashed to a ladder so tightly that the cords would cut into the flesh as the body writhed, and to make it more severe, sticks were inserted between the cord and flesh making a garrote whereby the cords would eventually cut through the flesh and sinew to the bone. The head was securely fastened to the ladder and placed lower than the feet, the mouth was distended with an iron fork called the bostezo and the nostrils stuffed tightly. A toca or strip of cloth was placed over the mouth and the weight of the water which was poured slowly into it forced the cloth into the throat and as the victim attempted to swallow to obtain relief strangulation and suffocation followed. But before he or she succumbed, for the Holy Office made no distinction as to sex, the toca was removed and confession was invited.

Another method, which was considered for Roget, was the garrucha or the hoist. This was quite simple, yet very effective. It consisted of a long rope through a pulley in the ceiling, one end of which was tied to the wrists of the accused which were pinioned behind him. Weights were tied to the feet and as the rope was pulled the arms were drawn upward behind him twisting them in their sockets. The weights were increased if the accused refused to confess or recant, and certain variations were prescribed such as letting the rope drop with a sudden jerk and arresting the fall in mid air. This method was regarded as entirely too mild by Father Mendoza.

The rack was by far the least diabolical. It was a frame with rollers at each end. The accused was securely fastened thereon and the rack distended thereby stretching the body and the limbs.

Father Gonzalo agreed with Father Salvandi that the rack should be the first method employed in questioning Roget but with the understanding with Father Mendoza that should it not prove efficacious that the others might be eventually used.

It was the letter of the law that no torture could be repeated yet it could be continued, and that the priest could not shed the blood nor cause the death of a prisoner. So the torture was always suspended before he was in extremis but if fortunately he should die the priest must seek absolution from one of his brothers. When finally condemned to the stake, the convicted one was not *delivered* but *abandoned* to the secular arm, thus relieving the priests of all responsibility in his death.

The guard house was to be the torture chamber for the reason that it was easier to carry the engines of torture there than to carry the prisoner back there after the question had been employed. But the law required certain steps to be taken in the various degrees, first mental and afterward physical torture. The mental torture consisted of the threat, the display and explanation of the implements and their uses, the stripping and finally the laying on the engine. The physical was the engine of torture in action. The law strictly provided that the accused should be "taken to" the engines. Father Salvandi contended that every technicality should be observed so it was necessary to take Roget to the house where they were placed, show and explain them to him and afterward have them carried to the guard house for use.

So on the morning following his sentence by the Tribunal of the Inquisition, Roget was required to don the sanbenito or robe of the impenitent, a yellow scapular made of sackcloth with a hole cut in the top through which his head was passed.

On this scapular was crudely painted red devils and shooting flames in token of the evil spirits which ruled his soul. On his head was placed a pyramidal cap made of card boards and sackcloth. In this garb he was marched to a hut, near the one used as the audience chamber or court room, to receive his first two degrees.

As he walked between his guards following the priests, each bearing a crucifix, and followed by the notary and fiscal prosecutor, he beheld Olata standing under a tree. The Indian was alone and apparently watching the garrison at their duties, but knowing him as he did, Roget at once saw that the quick eye of the savage was furtively scanning everyone who came in sight. The procession would pass close to him, but in these strange garments Roget doubted if Olata would recognize him and perhaps it would be better if he did not, lest he might commit some rash act which would be to his own detriment.

But the Indian stood carelessly beside the tree and waited. He had arrived at the settlement only a little while before from his trip south where he had guided Darboux and his men to a point near the village of Coacoochee where he had met some savages who agreed to guide them the rest of the way. He wished to hasten to Selooe where his white brother needed him and to take to him the letter from the brother of his white sister.

Upon his arrival at St. Augustine he had gone to the barracks to search for his white brother but he was not to be found. There was no one to question nor did he wish to make signs to any one to ask questions, for there was a lurking sensation of dread, a fear of impending doom that had hung over him for two days. During the previous night the spirit of his mother had bidden him to arise and hasten on. He did not know why, but he now felt an inclination to wander about and watch believing that he might find the one he sought.

So he proceeded toward the fort carefully looking for the

familiar figure, watching everyone who came into his view. The letter was safely tucked in his girdle, his bow was in his hand and his quiver well filled with arrows. No one paid attention to him for the presence of Indians who came daily to the settlement to trade had ceased to excite curiosity. As he neared the fort he passed beneath a live oak that stood beside one of the numerous trails which had been cut between the new houses recently built. As he reached the tree something told him, it seemed to be a whisper in the wind, to stand there and watch. He did so and in a few moments he saw the procession approaching.

The bright colors that flashed in the morning sunlight attracted his attention immediately and he gazed with curiosity at the strange ceremony. The white men who happened to be passing also stopped, for this was something new in St. Augustine. It reminded them of scenes in Spain, of the Inquisition and of the Auto-de-Fe there with all its terrors. They made the sign of the cross as the procession passed

Olatá suddenly recognized his white brother, but he did not know what it all meant. He did not appear to be in any danger, his hands were not tied, and while his dress was new and strange, it might be some great honor which had been bestowed upon him. Perhaps he had been made the great cacique of all the white men, his white brother was surely worthy of that. This impression was strengthened by the sight of the Spaniards standing near saluting him as the procession passed.

He had noted, however, that his white brother looked upon him sadly, there was not the usual smile of welcome which always gladdened the heart of the Indian. Within there was a feeling of uneasiness, he was not so sure that all was right. Anyway, he must wait to give him the letter, so he did not take his eye off the *sanbenito* until the door was closed behind it and he waited patiently until his white brother should come again.

Within the hut, Roget was threatened with the torture and then shown what it would mean by an exhibition of the various implements, and an explanation of their functions. These were to be the means of forcing him to acknowledge his crimes and recant. His answer was the same as before the tribunal, that he would remain steadfast in his faith. All of this was carefully entered by the notary, and the first and second degree having been complied with according to law, orders were given the guards to remove the engines of torture to the prison after which the procession started on its return.

Olata watched them pass again and in the countenance of his white brother he read sorrow and anguish. He had not spoken to him. There was something wrong, he was not doing this of his own accord, he must be a prisoner and all doubts were removed when he saw them enter the house where Roget had previously told him that such were confined. He had always doubted the white cacique with hair on his face and now he was sure that evil was intended against his white brother.

In the prison the ceremony was strictly followed in accordance with the code. The prisoner was stripped and again asked the question, to which he replied, "I cannot, it would be a lie."

Then he was laid upon the rack and securely bound. Father Salvandi, for the fourth time asked the question but the heretic remained steadfast in his heresy.

Then the order was given to proceed with the fifth degree. A guard stood at each end of the rack and the levers were slowly moved, the rack was gradually extended and the body and limbs of the victim stretched, not quickly but in unison, the arms, the legs, the neck, the body all under the same tension. Perfect uniformity of expansion was sought. Great beads of sweat sprang from the pores of the skin, the muscles became as tense as whipcords, the ligaments cracked, the face was twisted in agony of the torture but not a groan escaped the lips.

"The heretic has great power of endurance," remarked Father Mendoza.

Father Salvandi gave the signals and the tension was relieved. Again the question was asked.

"No," was the prompt reply.

The Dominican had hoped that Roget might have at least shown a penitent spirit. Even if he had failed to answer it would have been sufficient for him to have had the question suspended, for that was a matter for the conscience of the Inquisitors, but where the answer showed obduracy, there was nothing left but to continue.

So again the signal was given and again the rack lengthened as did the body. Farther than before did the levers go, it would seem that the bones would break. The crackling of the tearing ligaments sounded louder, the body writhed and the strong muscles strained at the straps in their efforts to find relief which increased the torture, for so it was intended. A groan this time was the reward.

"Ah," said the Jesuit, "I thought he would respond to that."

Again Father Salvandi gave the signal and the levers returned to their original place. This time the question brought only a shake of the head. The heretic, though weak, refused to recant.

"Reverend Father," said the Jesuit to the Dominican, "I suggest that the rack remain distended for an hour. The physical torture to the heretic will have salutary effect upon his soul."

Father Salvandi was equally polite in his reply but there was a ring of determination in his voice. "In my opinion, reverend father, the employment of the question is sufficient at least for the time."

"I note that you say at least for the time," Father Mendoza rejoined, "I presume that you do not desire the accused

to be abandoned to the secular arm without further effort to save his soul." The priest was smiling coldly.

"No," replied Father Salvandi, "the employment of the question, in my opinion, should be suspended now. Under the law it can be continued after two days." He hoped during that time to persuade Roget to recant. Even should he succeed, he knew that he would then have to fight the combined forces of the Jesuit and the Adelanado who, he believed, sought the life of the Frenchman. It would depend upon the vote of Father Gonzalo whether the prisoner should perish by the flames. But if he could not save the life of the young man, he could have at least saved his soul which was his devout desire.

Father Mendoza plainly showed his disappointment. "I give notice here and now," he said with some show of spirit, "that upon the continuance of the questioning that the escalara shall be used. The rack is too lenient for so obstinate a heretic."

"That we will decide at the time that the questioning is continued," retorted Father Salvandi, equally stubborn, "it is agreed that the question shall be further employed at the end of two days."

Father Gonzalo consented and the notary so entered it in the record. The Chief Inquisitor ordered the accused to be released from the rack.

Roget heard the conversation and realized that Father Salvandi was doing all he could for him. But he could not understand the logic of this torture when there was no possibility of his renouncing his faith. Why did they not proceed to kill him and relieve themselves of all this unnecessary labor. He could not get their viewpoint, that this was all for the edification of his own soul.

As the terrible engine had tightened its grip upon him and his arms, legs, neck and body had been stretched until it seemed that they would be pulled apart, he felt that he could not endure

the torture. It seemed that everything within him was being drawn asunder. Sharp pains shot through his brain, blinding flashes crossed his vision, it was all that he could do to keep from crying out but he would not so delight his enemies. The second torture had been greater than the first and his spirit of resistance was overcome. All had turned black before him and the groan has escaped involuntarily. It was probably well for him that it did for it saved him the additional torture from another turn of the engine.

When the engine was released and he was unbound, at first it seemed that his body was dead, his limbs were numb and he could not move them, but as the blood resumed its normal circulation the power of sensation returned to his organs and the most excruciating pains followed. It was necessary for the guards to carry him bodily to his bed of straw and every movement was additional torture. He was left entirely nude, the first merciful act of his persecutors, for to attempt to put his clothes on him would have been almost as bad as the rack itself. Fortunately it was warm, but the night would be cool, yet it mattered nothing to him now.

The Inquisitors retired from their Holy duties, the guards withdrew and the heretic was left alone on his bed of straw. He lay very still for every movement means a multitude of pains. It was all a kind of hazy dream as he looked up at the shaft of light that came through the small aperture near the ceiling. What was it all about? What had he done? Had he not the right to worship God as he believed to be right? They said that his soul would burn in Hell. Well, wasn't that his affair, if he wished to take the chance. They said that in two more days he would be tortured again, this time by strangulation with water. Why didn't they kill him, or just let him alone so he could die. Indeed the rack was efficacious in taking the spirit out of one.

He was aroused from his semi-coma by the opening and

shutting of the door. He did not turn his head, it was too painful and besides he did not care. But he heard some one approaching and the black mantle of the Dominican was outlined standing over him.

"Poor boy," Father Salvandi said in French, "would that I could bear your burdens for you," and bending over him he produced a jar of ointment from beneath his mantle and proceeded to anoint and gently rub the prisoner's muscles and joints as he tenderly spoke words of comfort in the patient's own vernacular. For an hour he continued his treatment until Roget was able to don his clothes, though it took quite a while and was with intense suffering.

"Try and use your limbs all you can, it will stimulate them and hasten your recovery," the priest told him. The Dominican knew from his long experience with the Inquisition.

"Recover only to suffer again," said Roget bitterly.

"Not if you will renounce your heresy."

"I cannot renounce that which I regard the truth, Senor Salvandi. I thank you for your kindness to me and I can even see that you are doing that which you deem your duty but should I renounce my faith, my soul would be lost. It is better that my body should be sacrificed.

"My son, my heart is torn with anguish that you cannot see the light. I know that I am doing that which is right in the sight of God for I am endeavoring to show you the true way. And I shall not be disheartened. I shall continue to pray for you and to beseech you to renounce your false doctrine."

It was the usual custom of the Dominican to visit the condemned and to encourage him to turn his mind from temporal things and allow it to dwell upon the joys of Paradise, to inculcate a contempt for the miseries of this life, and a veneration for the joys of the life to come. This could be obtained only through the acknowledgment that the Church of Rome

was the true and only Church of Christ or adherence to the doctrine of exclusive salvation. In Roget's case it was different. With the others he wanted to save their souls to die, in his case he wanted to save the soul of Isabel Mendrano's son to live.

The guard brought food and drink and the priest sat in the sand by the bed of straw and fed him. Then as the shadows fell and it was growing dark in the prison the priest knelt beside him and prayed. Then he bade him good night and went his way. The key turned in the lock, the scraping bars were put in place and all was still save the grinding sounds of the worms in the logs and the limbs of the oak scraping against the roof.

"Two more days and then more of the horrible torture," thought Roget. How long before the flames would end it all? He had now decided that hope was entirely gone. Before he had suffered on the rack, he had thought of Olata and Alphonse Darboux and of possible help from that source, but now his spirit was broken, only the darkness of despair was before him. The Indian could not possibly know the true state of affairs nor was there way to enlighten him. Alphonse would learn his fate too late.

He thought of Adele and wished that he could see her again before he died. He wondered if under the rules of the Inquisition he would be allowed to see her. He would ask that one favor of Senor Salvandi.

He wondered if the death of Jean Ribault and his followers would be avenged by the Crown of France. Would the power of the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, and the leaders of the Catholics, be sufficient to override the influence of Coligny, the leader of the Huguenot party? He feared so. His experiences in the religious wars of France had taught him that little could be expected for his people from Charles IX, his weak and vacillating King.

He could not sleep. If he dropped into a restless slumber his body would involuntarily move to seek relief from the constant aching only to be rewarded with a paroxysm of shooting pains piercing every part of his frame. He found it better to lie awake and attempt the experiment suggested by the priest. He was thankful for the companionship of the worms in the logs, there were two, close by his head, that seemed to vie as to the noise each could make. He listened to the boring sound, glad of the privilege for it was better than the oppressive silence and his own dismal thoughts.

It was far in the night that he heard the hoot of an owl. He started, his whole body ached from the sudden jerk but his heart beat fast with hope, for he instantly recognized the call of Olata. There was no mistaking that sound, the peculiar ending of the hoot which they had practiced so often in the forest at Caroline, as their own call which no one else would know. But now he could not answer, the guard just outside the door on the north side of the prison would hear him and be sure to investigate. He must remain quiet and wait. What the Indian had in mind he could not imagine, perhaps it was merely a message to tell him he was there, for he had evidently watched in the morning and knew where his white brother had come. But what could Olata do?

Again the call, and it was nearer now, in fact it sounded as if he were only a few yards away on the south side where the forest came close to the guard house. He was glad that he had not come to the north side where the guard was, though he knew that the dark form of the Indian could glide swiftly and noiselessly within a few feet of the white man without being detected.

He waited but the call was not repeated. He had about decided that the Indian had given the signal, whatever it meant, and had gone his way, probably to Saturiba to acquaint Satoriana, the mighty cacique of the Tumucuan, that the white

brother of Olata was a prisoner, and to arouse his savage hordes against the Spaniards that they might hasten to the rescue. In that case he knew that Menendez would not be cheated and that the heretic would be made short work of, lest he fall into the hands of his friends.

Then Roget heard a strange sound, it came from the roof. It was not the scraping of the limbs, it was more like the boring of a worm in the log, though louder. It came from the southwest corner and was now like the ripping of a board. He could hear it distinctly, someone was gently prying a slab from the roof. The task was a slow one, for after each cracking sound there was a pause. So quietly was it being done that the most acute ear would readily mistake it for the sound of the swaying limbs.

Roget readily guessed that it was Olata who had reached the roof by the overhanging limbs of the oak. For minutes, and it seemed hours to him, he waited, listening to the sound that reminded him of a rat gnawing in a pantry. His spirits were high with hope. Finally he heard the chirp of a cricket. He answered promptly in kind. Now he could hear the faint swish as if a rope was being lowered, it was so dark that no object was distinguishable, and then in the death-like stillness the faint sound as the body of the Indian touched the logs in descending. The chirp of the cricket now came from the ground, Olata was trying to locate him. He answered and though there was no treading sound, almost instantly a hand touched his form and a voice whispered in his ear

"Olata comes to save his white brother."

Roget could scarcely speak he was so overcome with joy. He grasped the savage in his arms though the effort meant misery to him.

"Olata did not forsake his white brother," he murmured.

"The spirit of my mother guided me and now I will take my white brother away."

"But how can I go, I cannot walk?" And whispering softly, he told the story of his agony.

"I will kill," said the Indian. As he listened he thought that his own race could take lessons in the art or torture.

"No, not now, there are other things to do. Have you a letter from the brother of Olata's white sister?"

"It is here," he replied, producing the message from Darboux. He told him that Alphonse and his men had gone to the village of Coacoochee.

Roget could feel the paper, but it was of no use to him for he could not read it now, and he feared it might be found on him if he kept it until morning. He had wondered how he could advise Adele of Alphonse's safety. Here was a way. Adele could not speak the language of the Indians, but this letter would bear the news to her, and Olata knew a few words of French and with the help of the sign language could tell her more. If Salvandi would allow him to see Adele he could learn the contents from her and if he would not, it would be of no value to him anyway.

"Take this letter to Olata's white sister. She is at the home of the white cacique. Go when he has departed that he may not know. Try to make her understand that I am here. Perhaps she may want to send a message to me which you can bring when the darkness falls again."

"Olata will do as his white brother says but he will also save his white brother from the cruelties of the white cacique."

"But I cannot go as you came," Roget replied.

The Indian thought a moment.

"Olata cannot dig beneath the wall now for the day will come too soon and the white cacique's men will see and know what Olata does. But when darkness falls again, then will Olata come with many braves. He will slip through the forest and beneath the shadow of the great tree dig a hole beneath the wall through which Olata's white brother may pass. The

moon will come when the darkness is but half gone so Olata and his white brother must be on their way by then."

"Then go, Olata, my brother," Roget said feelingly, "and may the Great Spirit and the spirit of your mother guide you. I will await your coming when the darkness falls again."

The Indian said no more. In the intense blackness of the prison the white man could not even discern the naked form of the savage and evidently Olata could not see the features of his white brother. But gently he moved both hands over the face of the prisoner as if his sense of touch would give him a last impression of the one he loved so well, should he return too late. Then he was gone.

Roget could hear the faint sounds as the toes of the savage caught in the crevices between the logs as Olata climbed up the rope which he had left tied to a rafter. He could then hear him replacing the slabs that his visit might not be suspected. In a few minutes he heard the hoot of an owl in the distance. Olata was safely away.

The heretic looked up into the darkness and through the night breathed his prayer to God. It was not a petition for relief from torture. It was a psalm of thanksgiving for the love of his red brother, who, though a savage and not wittingly worshipping the Christ, was yet showing his willingness to "lay down his life for his friend." And concerning this the Master had declared "greater love hath no man than this."

CHAPTER XXX

THE REUNION

When daylight began to seep stingily into the gloomy prison, Roget vainly endeavored to find the hole that Olata had made in the roof. There was no sign of it. The Indian had covered his tracks well. The white man breathed a sigh of relief for its discovery would have aroused suspicion which would have ruined his prospects of escape.

He had slept little but the torture of the body seemed to be allayed by the excitement of the mind over the contemplation of what the coming day and night might bring. Knowing that much depended upon his own physical condition, he followed Father Salvandi's suggestion to move his limbs frequently in order to stimulate them. It was most painful but that did not matter for he was now inspired by a hope that exhilarated and sustained him.

The guard was astonished when he brought the prisoner his breakfast to find him attempting to walk. He had expected to find him lying prone upon his bed of straw suffering from the effects of his torture. His words and manner expressed his great surprise.

"Ah, *Senor*," he exclaimed in admiration, "it is a miracle, the rack has no power over you."

Roget realized that his precocity might prove to be his undoing, especially if such news should reach the ears of Pedro Menendez, so he determined that henceforth when he heard any one preparing to enter the door that he would seek his pile of straw immediately.

The morning wore on and as each hour passed he wondered what Olata was doing. Had he yet seen Adele, or had he been unable to reach her? He thought of the many chances there were against the success of the plans which he and Olata had laid. Would Father Salvandi come today again to plead with him to recant? Or perhaps Father Mendoza or even Menendez himself might pay him a call to taunt him upon his miseries.

It was nearly noon, he thought, when he heard the scraping bar on the outside of the door. He was several feet from his bed, working his way along laboriously trying to make his swollen muscles pliable and his strained ligaments capable of functioning. He stumbled back to his straw and fell upon it almost exhausted with his efforts.

He was surprised to see the form of a woman enter the door in company with a priest. He could not tell who it was in the dim light, but his heart gave a bound as he thought it might be Adele. He was disappointed to find that it was only Juanita Acosta with Father Salvandi and he regretted even more that she had come when the priest announced the object of her visit.

"Good morning, my son. The guard says that you are physically much improved," the Dominican began.

Juanita stood timidly in the background.

"I was only taking your advice to move my limbs. The attempt is torture to me, but I feel that you know best," Roget said deprecatingly.

"Don't give up, if you persist you will find it will help you," the priest continued cheerfully, and then in solemn voice said, "Donna Juanita has come to visit you. I trust you will listen and give heed to her words, my son. She wishes to plead with you to recant, she offers you salvation. I hope that she may have better success with you than I have had."

There was nothing else he could do, he was a prisoner and

as such was powerless to protest. He wouldn't mind talking to Juanita on any other subject but what was the use of discussing a topic upon which there was no debate. But he might hear something of Adele and that at least was compensation.

"I am glad to see you Dona Juanita," he said courteously, "I trust you will pardon my not rising," he added with just a touch of irony.

"I will leave you two alone, my daughter," the priest said addressing Juanita, "May your efforts be crowned with success." He went to the door and passed out, leaving it wide open.

From his corner, Roget could see him engage the guard in conversation, but he could not hear his words.

Juanita came slowly to the bed of straw and sank on the edge of it, taking Roget's hand in hers, and the man was astounded beyond measure at the words she uttered.

"Ah, Louis, I know you have suffered and I have suffered with you." Her voice was low and vibrated with emotion. "I come not to talk religion, though Father Salvandi thinks I have. I came to help you, Louis. May God forgive me, but I must. I heard of your sentence of death and I plead with my uncle to spare you. He granted my request only to turn you over to the Inquisition. He claims now that he is powerless to interfere. I cannot see you suffer, I cannot see you die. I love you Louis, but I know you love Adele and she loves you. You think she is a Catholic, but she is not. She still says her heretic prayers. I hear her. I have known it all along. She recanted only to save your life, it is only for you that she now pretends she is a Catholic."

"For me?" Roget gasped.

Yes, she thinks she must remain a Catholic to save your life, uncle told her so."

"Why didn't she tell me this?"

"If she had told you, you would not have allowed it. The

Adelentado would have known that she had broken her promise to him and you would have been hung. That was the threat which was held over her."

Roget understood. Adele had been deluded into believing that she was making the sacrifice for him. But she was true, that was the glorious thought, she was true!

Juanita went on. "And now I have come to help you, to save you and Adele."

"To save Adele and me?" he asked. "How can you?"

She produced the letter which Olata had brought from Alphonse Darboux and handed it to him. "You have not time to read this now, Father Salvandi may come at any moment, but there are a few lines from Adele at the end, read those."

In the dimlight Roget made out the words beneath the familiar signature of Alphonse, "Trust Juanita, she will tell you all. God bless you, my love, Adele."

As Roget read, it seemed that the heavens had again opened unto him.

"How can I ever repay you, Dona Juanita?" he began, but she placed her hand over his mouth.

"Don't," she said and she let her palm gently stroke his face. "To know that you are happy will be my recompense. But I must hurry and tell you the rest. Olata came with the letter this morning. Adele and I have been planning for two days how we could save you. With Olata's few words of French and by signs we have made out that he intends to effect your escape tonight. So we have planned to meet you at the pier at midnight. She will be ready to go with you and Olata to join her brother. We want you to explain this to Olata when he comes for you."

"Yes, I will tell him, and may God bless you, noble Juanita," Roget said fervently, as he tenderly kissed her hand.

"And may He forgive me for thwarting the will of the Church, but I cannot let you die, Louis." She was silently

weeping.

"I am sure He will forgive you, Juanita. You will have saved a life."

"When you are gone I will confess to Father Salvandi. I know he loves you and I believe he may in time forgive me and ask for my forgiveness. My uncle the Adelentado will be very angry."

The Dominican was coming through the door.

"Remember, midnight at the pier," she hurriedly concluded, "and may God grant that you may escape."

"At midnight," he whispered as he secreted the letter.

"Father Salvandi," Juanita said sweetly, "I believe I have at least helped Senor Roget. He has not promised that he will recant, but I believe he will give serious thought to our conversation. I have said all that I can say. Do you wish to add anything, Father?"

The priest turned to Roget. "Are there any questions, my son, that you would like to ask concerning the doctrine of the Mother Church?"

"No," Roget replied humbly, "I think not. I will meditate upon what Dona Juanita has said. Her words have brought me great comfort and her presence has been as if an angel of mercy had entered my gloomy prison."

The priest beamed upon them. Perhaps after all he would not be compelled to employ the question further nor to condemn the son of Isabel Mendrano to the flames. In permitting Juanita to use her efforts to convert the heretic he was entirely within the regulations, and he was well pleased with the turn of events, as he said, "It was a happy thought, daughter, for you to suggest that you come to help me with Senor Roget. Let us hope that it may be the means of saving him."

Roget silently breathed a fervent "amen."

They bade him farewell and departed, leaving him alone, in the semi-darkness, but the light of hope shone brightly with-

in his heart and the thought of Adele's love was his guiding star.

He managed to make out enough of Alphonse's letter to learn that his plan was to wait at the village of Coacoochee for news of Adele and himself. He would immediately send fifty of his men to repair the caravel which was seaworthy and in which they expected to sail for France. He expected Olata to return in a few days with a message from Roget and his sister as to what move should be made to affect their escape for which he would hold one hundred and fifty men in readiness.

It was a long afternoon, the hours dragged slowly as he waited for night and freedom to come. He spent the time laboriously assisting nature in repairing the damage done by the rack. He found that the advice of the Dominican was good, for the more he exercised his muscles the easier it was for him to move about. He was now able to walk, though with difficulty and pain yet he kept doggedly at the task.

Late in the afternoon Father Salvandi came again. Roget hoped it would be the last time he would see the priest, yet it was with a degree of sadness. Even the Dominican's part in his great tragedy did not dim the memory of the many kindly acts of the zealot, whom he could not help but respect for the very intensity of his zeal. In the matter of sincerity of purpose their characters were not unlike.

Father Salvandi readily saw the change in the attitude of the prisoner, the air of hopefulness that pervaded his every word and act, but saw in it only the entrance of the divine light of the Holy Church into the soul of the heretic. He gave all glory to Juanita for the regeneration. As they said good-night, there was in the mind of each thoughts quite similar, the priest believed the prisoner was on the threshold of a new life, the prisoner himself hoped so, but the viewpoint of that life was radically different.

The little light that entered the hole near the ceiling had

entirely gone, even to the filmy shadow that came with the afterglow of the setting sun, and impenetrable darkness had settled within the walls of the prison. But it brought hope to Roget for soon Olata would come. He started at every sound and there were few of them in the stillness save the worms boring in the logs and the branches scraping on the roof. It was several hours before he heard the hoot of an owl and knew that his red skin brother was near, he also knew there were many possibilities for mistakes and that his freedom was by no means assured.

He listened for the sound of digging which would give him the glad tidings that Olata and his men were on the outside. Finally he heard a scraping noise in the dirt and he located the point. It was on the south side midway of the wall and almost opposite the door on the north. He wondered how long it would take them—one hour—two hours, he had no idea what progress could be made with the rude implements of the savages. Suppose the guard should hear them, he would give the alarm and all chance of escape would be gone. His heart sank at the thought, there came to him the vision of the water torture and the stake.

But Roget should have known Olata better for he had seen him on the war path against Outina the Themogoan and should have remembered that the young savage was very skillful in his methods. His red brother was taking no chances now, for a tall dark form was pressed closely against the wall at each corner of the log house to intercept the guard should he attempt to approach the place where the savages were digging, while two others with lynx eyes watched his every move.

Nor was this true only at the prison. Olata knew the position of every sentinel on the night watch about the fort and the settlement, and two lurking forms were near each one of them. The instructions from the son of the cacique were not to molest them unless the alarm was given, but at the cry

of the panther two arrows would speed toward the mark and two tomahawks would be ready to make assurance doubly sure.

St. Augustine was dark and quiet on this October night, Menendez felt secure under his treaty with Satouriana the Tumucuan, in fact he even regarded him an ally and a defense. All the Frenchmen had been massacred except a handful who were scattered to the south and there was no fear of them, therefore only the regular sentry about the fort and settlement was necessary.

The only lights were from the torch of the captain of the watch at the fort or from the lamp of a priest or a lay brother who was reading late. The only sounds were the occasional tinkling of the guard bell at the fort, which was the Spaniard's signal of security, and those from the night life of nature, the serenade of the frogs in the marshes, the chirps of insects or the call of the night bird.

The call of the chuck-wills-widow was the signal of one savage to another that all was well, but the cry of the panther, which was to be given only by Olata himself, meant "Kill!" All about the outer edges of the settlement could be heard at intervals the call of the night birds. The Spaniards, new to the country, had heard this bird when they had first arrived in the late summer. They did not know that at this season the chuck-will-widow had either migrated or ceased its peculiar cry. Olata had chosen the call of this bird for this very reason, there must be no chance for a mistake among his own men.

Sleep had not closed the eyes of the young Indian since his visit to Roget on the previous night. After his signal to his white brother that he was safe, he had circuited the settlement and gone north, soon reaching the nearest Indian village a league away. There he had awakened the sagamore and sent a message to Satouriana. Before the sun had risen, the mighty cacique had dispatched his runners throughout the land of the Tumucuan and when night had fallen again, a hundred picked

warriors met Olata in the forest near St. Augustine, and Satouriana was on the march with five hundred braves. Father and son each knew the plans of the other. The white cacique had broken his word for he had made a prisoner of the white brother of the son of the king.

Roget knew nothing of all this. All he knew was that every muscle and sinew in his body ached but it mattered little if only the hole under the wall of his prison would become large enough for him to crawl through to freedom. He noticed that suddenly the sounds of the diggings grew louder, the gentle scraping was succeeded by sharp, rapid strokes of the implements as if all effort for quiet was being disregarded. In alarm he thought that the guard would surely hear them. He did not know that the guard had heard, but would hear no more. The chuck-wills-widow, however, continued its call.

Olata had seen no reason for further delay and the opening was quickly made. Roget felt the sand weaken beneath him, the dirt was pulled back and the voices of the Indian could be heard through the opening. In a moment his red brother was beside him, delighted to find the white man standing, for he had expected to be forced to carry him bodily from his bed.

Quickly Roget told him of Juanita's visit and of the plan for Adele to meet them at the pier. This was exactly in accord with Olata's arrangements and was what he endeavored to tell Adele in the morning.

They decided that Roget should go through the opening first. Slowly he pulled himself along until he could see the stars and could fill his lungs with the fresh air. Then the arms of the giant sagamore Ucita caught him and help him to his feet. Olata came after him immediately. Two stalwart savages made a saddle of their hands and lifted the white man bodily and he placed his arms about their shoulders as they went noiselessly through the forest. It was only about two hundred

paces to the river bank where a batteau was hidden beneath the trees that overhung the bank.

Roget supposed it was close to midnight as the reflection of the rising moon could be seen in the east. It took only a few minutes to reach the river and place him in the seat at the stern of the boat. Olata who sat in the bow, was surprised at Roget's ability to move after his recent experience on the rack, and the heart of the savage was filled with joy, his white brother was free again. He raised his head and the hoot of the owl echoed through the woods telling those hidden there that the son of their chief and his white brother were on their way but their vigilance must not be lessened.

Impelled by the strong arms of four Indians, the batteau moved quietly under the shadow of the trees, while along the bank dusky forms kept pace, a guard against surprise.

As the large canoe approached the pier, Roget anxiously scanned it hoping to see Adele and Juanita waiting for them, but in the dim light of the rising moon he could see no one. They came alongside, the Indians skillfully holding the batteau against the piles that supported the structure, for the current of the tide was strong. With the boat well hidden in the shadow of the pier, Olata suggested that he would disembark and go in search of Adele, explaining to Roget that his men were stationed in the woods by the river and they could tell him if she had been there.

But as he started to climb to the pier, they heard voices and Olata squatted quickly and peered cautiously to see from whence the sound came. He could just make out several forms where the pier met the land and now they could hear footsteps on the boards and the voices became quite distinct. Roget could recognize Prevatt's.

"I will remain with you, Dona Juanita," he was saying, "It is not safe for you and Mademoiselle Darboux to be out so late alone."

"We are in no danger," Juanita replied, "and you are not wanted, Senor Prevatt."

But the renegade seemed determined to press his society upon the two young women. He spoke to Adele in French. "As for you, Mademoiselle Darboux, you will cease to scorn me when the heretic goes to the stake."

Adele did not answer, she was in a quandary what to do. She was afraid to leave the pier lest Roget and Olata would come and yet they were afraid if they remained there with Prevatt he would give the alarm.

But Olata thought he had solved the problem. He silently signalled to the others in the boat to pull along the side of the pier opposite Prevatt and the two women, who were standing about half way of the pier, Prevatt taunting Adele in French, Juanita scornfully chiding him in Spanish for remaining where he was not wanted. Just as they reached the point opposite them the batteau, swung by the tide, struck one of the piles hard enough to jar the structure. Prevatt halted in his speech and stepped to the side to learn the cause, looking down into the face of Roget.

He was astonished but quickly recovered from his surprise and gave the alarm.

"Help! The heretic has escaped! Help!"

Twice this cry rang out but the second one was lost in a scream of terror as he recognized Olata, for the Indian had sprung to the pier and his knife was buried in the breast of the traitor. Olata deliberately bent over the prostrate form of Prevatt to see that his thrust had not failed of its purpose. Then he pushed the body into the river.

But the cry had done its damage. The settlement was aroused. The captain of the guard had heard and the tocsin sounded loudly in the night, and the barracks was alive with soldiers answering the call.

Olata led Adele to the edge of the pier, by signs urging her

to hasten into the boat. Roget stood ready and with the help of one of the Indians soon had her on the seat beside him.

But Juanita's safety was now another problem. She stood beside Olata, who by signs was trying to make known to her that she should either follow them or leave the pier. She wrung her hands half hysterically trying to say goodbye to Adele and Louis but every second endangering her life by remaining where she was.

Roget had much to say to her to express his gratitude for her noble deed, but he knew it was now too late.

"You must go back," he called to her, "the Indians are there and you will be between their fire and the Spaniards."

She at last grasped the situation. "Goodbye Adele, goodbye Louis, God bless you both," she cried, as she hurried away. But Olata knew the danger and ran ahead of her as a guard until they reached a point beyond the woods and near to the house of the Adelentado, where he knew she would be safe.

Those in the boat could hear the noises in the settlement, the shouts of the men, the orders of the captains, even the call of Menendez who had heard the cry of Prevatt.

"This way!" they could hear his sharp command.

Olata ran swiftly back and as he reached the end of the pier the cry of the panther, rang through the night. Out of the woods sprang the naked warriors forming a cordon between the son of their chieftain and the oncoming Spaniards.

The wild cry had been heard to the farthest ends of the settlement and not one sentinel left his post alive.

Roget anxiously awaited Olata's return. He chafed under the restraint which his injuries forced upon him. Perhaps his red brother was not in danger, but he dare not leave Adele. The Indians with their paddles sat calmly waiting. They looked like black statues under the soft rays of the waning moon.

Gladly Roget and Adele heard the patter of the Indian's

bare feet upon the boards of the pier, and in a moment Olata swung over the side and dropped in the bow. Instantly the paddles were in the water and they were on their way.

Roget held Adele close to him, both were listening to the din behind, the yells of the savages, the ringing of the bell, the shouts of the Spaniards. Adele shuddered as the report of an arquebus rang out, followed by a fusillade of shots. Both thought the Menendez would pursue them, and they knew their fate if they should be overtaken. If Roget had been able to fight or if his own life alone was at stake it would have mattered little. Nothing would have suited him better than to meet the Spaniards in battle, but now Adele's life was to be considered first.

Olata evidently surmised their thoughts for he said, "Fear not my white brother and my white sister, there is no danger for Satouriana the mighty cacique of the Tumucuan with his warriors are between you and the white cacique. The arrows of the Tumucuan will fall like hail stones upon him should he attempt to follow."

Onward the bateau went through the night. The moon rose higher and shone through the palms that lined the banks of the Matanzas. Three other canoes lighter than the bateau escorted them, one in front and two following. They passed the dunes of Matanzas where Ribault and his followers fell, and beyond the arms of the sea through the creeks and bayous which make an inland waterway, within sound of the ocean's roar.

Roget and Adele whispered their love and talked of their plans for the future. He would not listen to her commiserations concerning his tortures, for he said that they were as nothing compared to those she had mentally suffered. He begged her again and again to forgive him for doubting her loyalty to their faith. Between them was perfect love and understanding. Without fear or trembling they repeated to-

gether the Huguenot prayer of Thanksgiving for their deliverance.

In the morning they stopped at an Indian village where they had food and drink and rested for a few hours. A runner came to Olata with the news that Menendez had been halted by the arrows of the Indians, and that he had been forced to return to St. Augustine and even to the protection of the fort.

On the following day they reached the village of Coacoochee that nestled in a grove of live oaks on the bank of a beautiful river. It was a happy reunion, Roget and Adele, Alphonse and Ernest Darboux, Charles Verdier and the remnant of the French colony.

All were unanimous in the decision to return to France as soon as the caravel, which lay within the harbor of an inlet a few miles to the south, should be ready for the sea.

It was a gladsome day when the French and their allies the Tumucuan gathered beneath the oaks to witness the marriage of Roget and Adele by the chaplain of the caravel.

Olata was happy in the happiness of his white brother and sister, but very sad as he watched the sails of their ship fade away into the blue.

And as Louis and Adele stood upon the deck of their little vessel bound for France and happiness, and watched the low lying shore grow dimmer, they thought not of their own sufferings there but of the wonderful love of Juanita, the Spanish girl, and of Olata, their red skin brother.

The sun, nestling in a bank of clouds, touched the horizon behind the fringe of palms, casting shafts of rose across the ethereal blue, bathing sea and sky in ever changing colors.

But as the sunset faded into the after-glow, their joy was tinged with sadness that the New Religion had not taken root in the New World, as had been their devout hope, and that the Lilies of France had not been implanted in this wondrous land.

THE END

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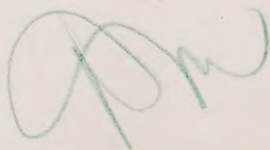
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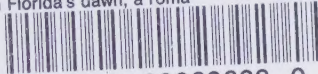
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